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FALSTAFF's WEDDING:

A

COMEDY.

BEING

A SEQUEL to the SECOND PART of the PLAY

OF

KING HENRY THE FOURTH.

Written in Imitation of SHAKESPEARE,

By Mr. KENRICK.

In magnis voluiſſe ſat eſt.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for J. WILKIE, in St. Paul's Church-yard; F. BLYTH, at St. John's Coffee-houſe near the Royal-Exchange; T. LOWNDES, and W. OWEN, in Fleet-ſtreet; BECKET and DE HONDT, in the Strand; T. LEWIS, in Ruſſel-ſtreet, Covent-Garden; J. WALTER, at Charing-Croſs; and J. ALMON, in Piccadilly, oppoſite Burlington-Houſe.

M.DCC.LXVI.

TO MR. QUIN,

IN RETURN

FOR THE FREQUENT PLEASURE RECEIVED

BY HIS REPRESENTATION OF THE CHARACTER

OF SIR JOHN FALSTAFF;

A PLEASURE

WHOSE REMEMBRANCE IS AS GRATEFUL AS SUCH

REMEMBRANCE IS INDELIBLE;

THIS ATTEMPT,

TO COPY THE GREAT ORIGINAL

WHICH HE EXHIBITED ON THE STAGE

IS INSCRIBED,

AN IMPERFECT TRIBUTE TO PERFECT MERIT,

BY THE AUTHOR.

THE

PREFACE.

THE remarkable ill ſucceſs of preceeding imitators of Shakeſpeare *, would certainly have deterred the preſent writer from renewing the attempt, were he to be eaſily diverted from a favourite object by the difficulties attending its purſuit. But having long ſince adopted the Motto, *In magnis voluiſſe ſat eſt*, the arduouſneſs of the taſk is only an additional incentive to his perſeverance.

As to the preſent performance, however, it muſt not be ſuppoſed that he preſumes to think it will in the ſmalleſt degree contribute to deprive his great maſter of that honour, which is ſo juſtly and peculiarly his due; *viz.* that of being truly *inimitable*. Had there been the leaſt room, indeed, for ſuſpecting the author of ſuch a deſign, the profound reverence and eſteem which he bears to the memory of SHAKESPEARE, would have induced him rather to commit his manuſcript to the flames than to the preſs: for, however roughly he may have cropt the bays, which have been proſtituted to grace the temples of the living, he will never deface, with unhallowed hands, the laurelled buſts of the dead.

The truth is, this little piece was a juvenile performance, written ſo long ago as the year 1751, when the author was young and giddy enough to amuſe himſelf in a ſtuffed doublet, before a private audience, with an attempt at a perſonal repreſentation of the humours of Sir John Falſtaff. How he performed his part was then, and is now, of no conſequence; how far he might enter into the ſpirit of his author, may poſſibly be gathered from a peruſal of the following ſheets, containing the reſult of thoſe impreſſions, which the ſtriking excellencies of the character then left on his mind.

Were the author poſſeſſed of that ridiculous mock-modeſty, on which it is the faſhion for modern authors

* A very eminent writer hath ſeverely ridiculed theſe imitations, by ſaying, that the beſt he ever ſaw, had copied Shakeſpeare only in the following line.

And ſo good morrow to you, good maſter Lieutenant.

to pique themſelves, he might affect to treat this work as the paultry *jeu d'eſprit* of his boyiſh days, unworthy of his preſent notice, or that of the public. But, if he really thought it ſo, he would have acted otherwiſe with regard to its publication: for though he ſhould be ſorry the preſent object of his ſtudies were not more uſeful and important, yet he muſt frankly own that, if he was aſhamed of having written this little performance, he ſhould be equally aſhamed of offering it to the public. An hour's entertainment, for a reader of taſte and judgment, is not always at hand, much leſs concomitant with novelty. If the writer, therefore, by having agreeably amuſed himſelf a few days, may contribute to one hour's amuſement of ſuch a reader, it is the utmoſt he expects or deſires from this publication.

It is preſumed, alſo, that his favourable opinion of it, will not be thought altogether founded on ſelf ſufficiency, when the reader is informed that one of the beſt judges of Shakeſpeare now living, has declared it to contain "*a very good imitation of* Shakeſpeare, *particularly in the* "*character of* Falſtaff."

This was Mr. Garrick; whoſe letter now lies before me—not a letter written to the author (for in this polite and complimenting age ſuch teſtimony might juſtly be deemed equivocal) but a letter written on this ſubject above ſix years ago, to one of Mr. G's acquaintance, whom the author neither knows, nor hath ever ſeen †.

Several of the writer's friends, indeed, have conceived this piece might be brought with ſucceſs on the ſtage; for which, however, it never was planned nor intended*; having been written as a kind of poetical exerciſe, which

† R. B. Eſq; as the author was informed by capt. M——, who gave him Mr. G's letter.

* The author being ſo far of opinion with Dr. Johnſon that, notwithſtanding the many excellencies with which Shakeſpeare's plays abound, there is not one of them perhaps, which, if we take it all altogether, would go down with an audience, if repreſented as a new performance—Mr. Garrick appeared alſo to be of the ſame opinion; obſerving in his letter abovementioned, that there would be ſome riſque in bringing on ſo many of Shakeſpeare's known characters in a new piece.—It is on this circumſtance, however, that the merit of the imitation in a great degree depends; ſo that to have alter'd it for the ſtage would have in a great meaſure perverted the deſign of writing it.

the

the author had preſcribed to himſelf, and of which he was by no means vain; well knowing that an indifferent writer may ſometimes be lucky in his imitation of the beſt.

That he was ſincere in theſe ſentiments, he thinks ſufficiently evinced by keeping his piece in manuſcript nine years, and even permitting it to remain ſix years in the bookſeller's warehouſe after it was printed. Nor would it even now have made its appearance, might it not ſerve in ſome meaſure to corroborate what the author hath elſewhere aſſerted, with regard to his *Review of Dr. Johnſon's Shakeſpeare, viz.* that that editor muſt impute the ſevere chaſtiſement he hath received, not to any motives of perſonal reſentment againſt him, but to an enthuſiaſtic veneration for Shakeſpeare, long ago enkindled and ſtill glowing with unremitted ardour.

To cloſe with a word or two to the critics. The author foreſaw that theſe mice would neceſſarily be nibbling; he hath therefore purpoſely left ſome rotten holes in the cheeſe, that the poor little animals may be kept doing; for, conſidering them as real objects of pity, he would by no means have them ſtarve for want of employment.

He would not have them plume themſelves, however, ſo immoderately as they ſometimes do, on their proweſs and penetration, at the caſual detection of a maggot or the incidental deſtruction of a mite.

The reader may poſſibly think it a fault that the author hath in ſome places copied the blemiſhes of Shakeſpeare; but if he hath ſucceeded in any degree in hitting off his beauties, he hopes he ſhall ſtand excuſed, even ſuppoſing him miſtaken in conceiving ſuch blemiſhes neceſſary to preſerve the ſimilitude of the imitation. What limner, who piques himſelf on drawing an exact likeneſs, would omit a diſtinguiſhing mole or freckle, tho' not altogether agreeable to the ſight, or compatible with ſymmetry and beauty?

But if, after all, the public ſhould think the writer hath thrown his time away upon an inſignificant ſubject, he proteſt againſt their preſent deciſion, and appeal — to e ſame public, when leſs intoxicated with the fumes of odern criticiſm, and better diſpoſed to do juſtice to the immortal genius of SHAKESPEARE.

Jan. 1, 1766.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

King HENRY the Fifth.

Dukes of { GLOUCESTER, BEDFORD, CLARENCE, } Brothers to the King.

Dukes of { YORK, EXETER, } Uncles to the King,

Archbiſhop of CANTERBURY,
The POPE's LEGATE,
Lord SCROOP of MASHAM,
The Earl of CAMBRIDGE,
Sir THOMAS GREY,
Sir JOHN FALSTAFF,
Juſtice SHALLOW,
Maſter SLENDER,
PLEADWELL, a Lawyer,
MITHRIDATE, a Doctor,

Fathers { PAUL, LAWRENCE, } two Friars,

BARDOLH,
PISTOL,
PETO,
FRANCIS.

Dame URSULA, afterwards Lady FALSTAFF,
ELEANOR POINS, quondam Miſtreſs to the King,
Hoſteſs QUICKLEY,
DOL TEARSHEET.

Biſhops, Lords, Officer, Page, Guards, and Attendan

FALSTAFF's WEDDING, &c.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Street in WESTMINSTER,

On the Day of the Coronation of King HENRY the Fifth.

Enter Sir *John Falſtaff*, ſolus.

WHAT a ſcurvy quarter is this? Not a buſh, or a blind Cupid, in the neighbourhood! 'ſblood, my legs will fail me e'er I reach a tavern. Phoo—Phoo—It is ſome comfort, however, I eſcap'd being ſuffocated. The green-apron'd raſcals, crowding after the proceſſion, had well nigh made an end of me.

SCENE II.

Enter *Bardolph*.

Bar. O, Sir John, I'm glad I have found ye. I was in the fearfulleſt quandary for you in the world. I hope your honour has got no hurt.

Fal. Not its death's wound, I hope; though Hal, indeed, look'd ſomewhat cold upon me.

Bar. Cold, Sir John! I am afear'd we ſhall be in limbo ſhortly: for my Lord-chief-juſtice——

Fal. Hold thy ill-omen'd croaking. If faithful ſervices are thus requited, I will turn cordwainer; yea, cobler, and heel-piece old ſhoes, ere I have to do with blood royal again. Ingratitude! I hate it.

Bar. To be ſure, Sir John, what you ſay is right; for, as the ſong ſays, ingratitude is worſe than the ſin of witchcraft. But I hop'd your honour got no perſonable harm in the mob: you was carried off the terras, for all the world, like a dunghill from Mill-bank by a ſpring tide.

Fal. Bardolph, thou haſt the moſt filthy way of mak-

ing compariſons; the moſt villainous ſimiles. Let me have no more of them.

Bar. Why, they ſay, indeed, compariſons are odorous Sir John.

Fal. Thine, however, are unſavoury enough. But I am ill at eaſe, and more diſpos'd to ſpleen than merriment. I prythee, look out, and ſee if there be a bawdy-houſe at hand.

Bar. What here, ſo near the Court, Sir John?

Fal. Where better? 'Sblood, doſt think there are no whores at Court? Are there no dames of honour? Doſt think Hal hath baniſh'd them too? Look out, look out.

Bar. I will, Sir John. [Exit *Bardolph.*

SCENE III.

Sir *John Falſtaff*, ſolus.

I would I were in Eaſt-cheap. Mine hoſteſs hath a moſt excellent cordial; and I never ſtood in more need of it than now. The groſs indignity Hal hath put on me, ſticks in my throat; and, in the end, may go near to choak me. I ſhall never gulp it down: that's flat: unleſs, indeed, a full cup of ſherris help to clear the way. And then, how I ſhall ſtomach it; how I ſhall digeſt it, heaven knows. At preſent, both my perſon and knighthood are in jeopardy; my Lord-chief-juſtice, to whoſe care I am commended, holding me not altogether in good liking. But no matter—if I am to be provided for, what avails it who is my caterer? I could wiſh, nevertheleſs, old white wine ſtood higher in his Lordſhip's favour; that I may not be ſtinted at table, or in my by-drinkings. I like not ſuch ſplenetick temperaments; ſuch phlegma ick conſtitutions; grey beards, that never ſympathize with the wants of young men, or make proper allowances for their continual waſte of radical moiſture.——'Sblood, I am as ſore and as melancholy as a blind horſe in a mill.——Bardolph! where a plague art thou gotten to, caterwauling?

SCENE IV.

Enter Mrs. *Quickly* and *Doll Tearſheet*.

Quick. O, Sir John Falſtaff!

Doll. O, ſweet Sir John!

Fal.

Fal. How! mine hoſteſs, and my good veſtal Mrs. Tearſheet! ſave ye gentlewomen both, good-morrow.

Hoſt. Godild ye, Sir John—well I vow and proteſt an I didn't ſay he would take as civil notice of his old acquaintance: nay, tho'f he was created my lord-mayor of London.

Doll. What talk ye of lord-mayors and fuſty citizens, goſſip Quickly? Sir John is a courtier, and to be ſure we muſt gratulate him now as one of the greateſt knights in the nation.—O ſweet Sir John!—

Fal. Truce with your formalities. Mrs. Dorothy. It is true, indeed, I am one of the biggeſt knights in the kingdom—but, pray, have you ſeen none of our followers by the way? Piſtol, nor Peto!

Quick. No verily, Sir John, not one.—We have ſeen nothing of any of them to day. They are all gone to the coronation, I warrant; and indeed we ſhould have been there too, hadn't it been for that wicked villain, conſtable Fang, that, by a miſtake of the beadle of our ward, would have carried us to Bridewell this morning.

Fal. How! mine hoſteſs and my fair Dorothy to Bridewell!

Quick. Even to Bridewell I can aſſure ye.

Fal But how; how? dame Quickly to Bridewell! a decent church going widow and a modeſt maiden, I ſhould ſay, ſingle gentlewoman, to a houſe of correction! why, what——

Quick. So I ſaid, Sir John. Nuthook, Nuthook, ſays I, do you know what you do, ſays I?—Have me to Bridewell, ſays I,—I ſay to Bridewell indeed! a ruptable houſekeeper, that has paid ſcot and lot, and borne the burthen of half the pariſh any time theſe twenty years.

Fal. That thou haſt, hoſteſs; of the male half, I'll be ſworn for thee.

Quick. Beſides, ſays I, do you know Sir John Falſtaff? ſays I.—Touch a hair of Mrs. Dorothy's head, ſays I, and Sir John will make you ſmart for it, ſays I, ev'ry bone in your ſkin, ſays I.

Fal. And what ſaid the raſcal to that?

Quick. Said, Sir John! he ſtood mumchance, and ſpoke never a living ſyllable, but ſet his vinegar-viſag'd catch-poles upon us; who faſtened their claws into Mrs.

Tearſheet's beſt kirtle, and tore it into as many rents and tatters, as there were in the old tapeſtry hangings I pawn'd to fit your honour out for the laſt expedition.

Fal. Pſhaw.

Dol Yes indeed, Sir John, made a mere tadderdemallion of me. But we did ſo tongue the leather-car'd vultures——

Fal That they were glad to looſe their gripe to get rid of you, I ſuppoſe.

Quick. Nay, Sir John, I was obliged to perduce an angel to convince them we were not the parties indicted.

Fal. Infidel rogues! would nothing leſs than the teſtimony of an angel convince them?

Quick. Ay I knew how Sir John would take it. O, how ſoundly will the knave conſtable be ſwing'd for this! a jack-in-office raſcal! we ſhall cure the blue-ſkin'd runnion of his itch for whipping, I warrant ye.

SCENE V.

Re-enter *Bardolph.*

Bard. I have been looking all about, Sir John, but I cannot find one.

Quick. What is it Sir John wants, Mr. Bardolph?

Bar. A bawdy-houſe, miſtreſs.

Quick. O Jeſu-Maria! Mrs. Dorothy.

Fal. How, ſirrah! did not I ſend thee to look out for a houſe of civil entertainment, where I might repoſe myſelf after my fatigue? What, you rogue, would you make of me, here, before theſe ſuperabundantly-virtuous gentlewomen?

Quick. Yes, indeed, Sir John, and ſo to be ſure we are: for, in good ſooth, no-body need be aſham'd of their civilities to your honour's knighthood. And as to a houſe of civil entertainment, Sir John; here is one hard by, where the knights and lords, and all the great gentlemen of the court, are entertained, both by night and by day, as civilly as at their own homes; and by gentlewomen as kind to them, I warrant ye, as their own ladies themſelves.—A houſe of civil entertainment, a bawdy-houſe truly! Why, I keep a houſe of civility myſelf, and I would have you know Mr. Bardolph——

Bar. Nay, nay, 'tis all one: what Sir John pleaſes.

Quick.

Quick. Yes, by my truly, and ſo I think it ought, for if Sir John recommends you to the king——

Dol. Nay, were I Sir John, I'm ſure I would never promote ſuch a clown as Bardolph at Court.

Bar. Ah! Dol, Dol, I am afraid our promotion will be at the gallows. If Sir John has any intereſt with the hangman, he may get me preferr'd, perhaps, to the top of the ladder.

Dol. Why, how now, varlet?

Quick. Do you hear? do you hear, ſweet Sir John?

Fal. Ay hoſteſs, Bardolph is ſomewhat blunt: but, as for the king——

Quick. Heav'ns bleſs him! a ſweet young prince he was; and, to be ſure, a gracious king he is. But what of him, Sir John?

Fal. Why, marry,—hang him, hoſteſs—Treaſon muſt out as well as murder.

Quick. I am 'maz'd Sir John; why, how is this? what a goodneſs! when—where

Dol. How is this, good Bardolph?

Fal. Why, I will tell ye how it is. That ſame ungrateful, ſneaking, pitiful raſcal, we are ſpeaking of, is turn'd fanatick.

Quick. Fanatick! the king a fanatick!

Fal. Ay, fanatick, preſbyter, biſhop, if you will. Let his crown be his mitre; I care not.

Dol. We don't take your meaning, Sir John.

Fal. You muſt know then, Dol, that after having, in pure love and affection, ridden poſt day and night fourſcore and odd miles, to congratulate him on his accеſſion, and condole with him on his father's death; inſtead of bidding me welcome to court, he preach'd me my own funeral ſermon.

Quick. A funeral ſermon!

Fal. Ay, hoſteſs: for at the end of his diſcourſe he order'd me to be buried alive, at ten miles diſtance from the court. And, to make this unnatural interment the ſurer, he has appointed my Lord-chief-juſtice his undertaker, to ſee to the diſpoſal of my corpſe.

Quick. Buried alive, quoth he! what, what is in all this!

Fal. In plain terms, dame Quickly, your gracious king hath baniſh'd me the preſence; and, till he grows

a graceleſs prince again, I am forbidden to approach his perſon, within ten miles, on penalty of being hang'd. Take ye me now?

Quick O Jeſu! is poſſitable?

Dol. Ah, ha! is it ſo? ſits the wind in that quarter?

Quick. Well, as I am an honeſt woman, who would have thought it? it is a world to ſee!

Dol. And ſo, Sir John is in diſgrace; ſtill plain Jack Falſtaff and one of us! ha! ha! ha! poor blown Jack!

Quick. A ſad diſappointment, indeed, Sir John! but, in good faith, things fall out ſo odd, and the world goes ſo wrong, and the times are ſo hard; that here, there, why, no longer ago now than yeſterday, was I obliged to pay the lord-knows what-all away for one thing or other: and then my misfortune to day; an angel to the conſtables; and beſides this comes the day after to-morrow, when I muſt make up a ſum for the wine-merchant: wherefore if your honour would but diſcharge your ſcore in Eaſt-cheap; becauſe, as why, your honour knows——

Fal. How's this, dame Quickly?

Quick. Becauſe, I ſay, as why, your honour knows, ſeventy odd pound is a great deal of money for a poor widow woman to loſe.

Fal. What talk you of loſing, hoſteſs?

Quick. True, Sir John, as you ſay, to be ſure, I ſhall not be willing to loſe it: for the law is open, and I know which way to get my money.

Fal. I am glad thou doſt, hoſteſs: as in that caſe I need not give myſelf the trouble to pay thee. The law is open, ſay'ſt thou? Ay, like a mouſe-trap, on the catch for nibbling clients. Enter thy action, and I will hold thee a gallon of ſack, thy departed huſband will get out of purgatory ere thou out of the hands of thy lawyer.

Quick. Nay, Sir John, you need not twit me upo that. You need not fling my poor huſband's ſoul in m teeth. He has not been gone ſo long; tho' for the ma ter of that, he might have been in heav'n before no hadn't I lent you the money Mr. Dumb ſhould have ha to ſay maſſes for him Yes, Sir John, you have put in that great belly of yours what ſhould have got my po huſband out of purgatory, and now you reproach m

for it. Had he been ſtill alive you would not have us'd his diſconſolate widow thus. You wouldn't, Sir. John.

Fal. No, I'll be ſworn I ſhould not.

Quick. Well then, Sir John, out of charity, if it were nothing elſe, you ought to repay the money. Nay, if you don't, I'll pray night and day that you may be haunted by his ghoſt. Heav'n reſt his ſoul. I would he might never ſleep quietly in his grave, till he has made you pay me.

Fal. Go to, thou art a fooliſh woman: with good words thou mayſt be paid.

Quick. No, Sir John, good words will not do. I muſt have money Sir John. The prieſts won't get a ſoul out of purgatory without money. Beſides, Sir John, good words are no payment, I can get no body to take them: good words will not do with me.

Fal. Well, well, I ſay you may be paid——

Quick. May! Sir John, I muſt.—You have thus ſhuffled off and on me, a good while; but I muſt, I muſt be paid, I muſt——

Fal. Heigh! heigh! wilt thou raiſe the neighbourhood upon us? If thou art clamorous, I will have thee duck'd in the Thames, for a bawd. What, a-plague, art thou drunk? A good-natur'd wench, as thou art, if it were not for thy ſhrill tongue and vixen humours. On the honour of my knighthood thou ſhalt be paid. Doſt thou doubt mine honour?

Quick. Why, Sir John, to be ſure, no-body would ſcruple to confide in your honour's honour: but then you know Sir John (no-body better) what honour is. It will buy neither coals nor candles; nor will my landlord take it for rent, nor the merchant for ſack or ſherry. But would you give me only the half in money, and leave the reſt to honour; ſo that a body might keep open houſe, Sir John. That would be doing ſomething.

Fal. Nay, if thou wilt be adviſ'd, I will do more for thee—Bardolph! forget not to go (when I ſend thee) to the caſhier, with whom I left a thouſand pound this morning, and tell him to ſatisfy Mrs. Quickly forthwith.

Quick A thouſand pound!

Fal. The times are not ſo bad, hoſteſs (thanks to our friend Shallow) but we may yet have a merry bout in Eaſtcheap.—How ſays my Dol?

Dol. Nay, you know, ſweet Jack, I was always at your pleaſure there.

Quick. That I will ſay for her, and a ſweeter-natur'd better hearted creature never lay by the ſide of a true man. But, goodneſs heart! why do we tarry here, when Sir John complained of his being fatigued, and was looking for a houſe of civil entertainment? I will ſhew you the way incontinently, Sir John.

Fal. I thank thee, hoſteſs; I am now ſomewhat recruited, and will endeavour to reach Eaſtcheap. And yet a cup of ſack, by the way, I think, would not be amiſs. Let us in. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

A *Gallery* in the *Royal Palace.*

Enter Earl of *Cambridge* and Lord *Scroop* of Maſham, meeting.

Scroop. My lord of Cambridge! wherefore doſt thou leave
The preſence thus, to ſkulk in holes and corners;
Indulging thy ungovernable ſpleen?
My life for't, ere 'tis long thou'lt be obſerv'd:
King Harry muſt be blind he does not mark
The clouds of treaſon low'ring on your brow.
By heav'n your heart's ſeen plainly in your face,
Rebellion threatens in your very looks.
Caſt off thoſe frowns, for ſhame; and wear a ſmile,
As if not Henry, but yourſelf were king.

Cam. Now, by th' immortal Edward's honour'd ſhade,
I cannot do't. This pomp of coronation
Hath ſet my ſtirring ſpirits up in arms.
I'm ſtung with ſcorpions that I tamely ſuffer
This limb of the dead tyrant Bolingbroke
T' uſurp the throne of my wife's brother, Mortimer.
Deriv'd from Clarence, the third Edward's ſon,
Whoſe birth preceeded that of John of Gaunt;
'Tis clear, in point of right, that Richard's death
Left him the faireſt title to the throne;
And ſhall he live, ſecluded from the light,
To breathe the dank dews of unwholſome priſons?
To waſte the flowring ſeaſon of his days,
Coop'd up within a nook of ſix foot ſpace,

Of

Of all that kingdom to the which he's heir?
No, by the blood of York, that fills my veins,
I'll right him yet. He yet ſhall be a king.

Scroop. Soft, Cambridge, ſoft—ſtone walls at court have ears.
Know'ſt thou not that? I hate as much as thou
The tyrant houſe of Lancaſter. But, ſtay;
We are not yet in ſtate to pull it down:
To ſhake it were at peril of our heads.
Remember Percy, Worceſter, Haſtings, Scroop,
And others, the firſt nobles in the land,
That idly periſh'd in this deſperate cauſe.
Blood hath already been too freely ſhed
In this ſtill thirſty quarrel: ſhall we raiſe
The ſleeping axe to fall but on ourſelves?
No, be thou wary, cheriſhing thy hate
No more than is conſiſtent with thy ſafety.

Cam. I cannot bear to ſee this truant youth
Thus diſappoint our boldeſt expectations.
It pours cold water on my ſmoth'ring hopes,
That blaz'd at the deceaſe of hated Bolingbroke.

Scroop. Had Harry prov'd the idler we expected;
There had indeed been hopes for Mortimer:
But now——

Cam. Oh! I could go to daggers with him,
To ſee his grave demeanour and addreſs;
But yeſterday with thieves a pot-companion,
The ſcoff and nay-word of each manly tongue.
I'm all on fire, to hear his ſober prate,
See his mock-majeſty and portly mein,
So aping royalty, that all his peers
Cry out in wonder of their gracious king.—
Lord Scroop of Maſham, ſwear thou art my friend.

Scroop. Cambridge, what now? haſt thou not found it oft?

Cam. I have—no more—ſhall Mortimer be king?

Scroop. With all my heart: would 'twere in Maſham's power!
But ſteep and many are the ſteps between
His lowly cell and England's lofty throne:
Steps which, at preſent, none may ſafely tread.
In ſilence, therefore, hope for better times,
And bear thee evenly till heav'n ſhall ſend them.

Cam. I cannot, tho' at hazard of my head.
I was not form'd to play the hypocrite,
Or wear a face that's foreign to my heart.
Harry regards me with a friendly eye,
Profuſely ſhow'ring on me daily favours,
As if he ſought to win me from myſelf:
Methinks I would not give him room hereafter
T'upbraid my ſoul with that foul ſin ingra itude.

Scroop. How ſay'ſt thou? am not I in favour too?
But what of that? doſt think what kings beſtow,
Is giv'n in love? truſt me, 'tis policy;
Mere policy! they muſt be ſerv'd—to you
What gives king Henry more than is your own?
For well he knows, that next to Mortimer,
Your wife lays claim to th' crown.—Reſpecting me,
Think you not Harry builds upon my ſervice?
His kindneſs too may bribe me to forget
A Scroop was once beheaded by his father.
But, if I do forget it, or forgive,
May heav'n forget me in my laſt diſtreſs!

Cam. And yet, methinks, revenge ſo deeply rooted
Might make diſſimulation deeply painful.
For me, I know my heart's ſo full of hate,
That ſhews of love but hurt me to the ſoul.

Scroop. Why what a ſqueamiſh conſcience, lord, is thine?
Not brook hypocricy! what elſe is made
The univerſal buſineſs of mankind?
Mark but the thriving features of the world:
There's not a male of half a grain of wit,
From childhood upwards, even from ten to eighty,
But is an arrant hypocrite. The ſchool-boy,
Nature whipt out of him and barefac'd honeſty,
Plodding with vacant ear and leaden eye,
Follows his feſcue, poring o'er his book,
As if he conn'd his leſſon; while abroad
His abſent mind is robbing groves and orchards,
Or ſcamp'ring o'er the fields, in truant play.
Grown up to manhood, the hot blood of youth
Urges the luſtful ſtripling, in the dark,
To the rank ſtews in lanes, blind ſtreets, and allies;
Whence, ſkulking e're 'tis light, he dons the maſk
Of ſoberneſs demure, to cheat the day.

Se

See next the worn-out ribaud, paſt his labour,
Scarr'd by the goujeres of his younger days;
With him hypocriſy turn'd inſide out,
He puts the maſk on with the worſt ſide outwards,
And chaſte, perforce, hires ſtrumpets to abuſe him.
In each condition, age, and ſtate of life,
Thus ſeem men good or bad, they're ſo far neither;
Better or worſe they may: but all agree
To dupe each other by hypocriſy.

Cam. What argues this but poverty of ſoul;
The ſneaking cowardice of narrow minds?

Scroop. Cambridge! we live but in a narrow world.
Had individuals all the ſouls of kings,
This globe would be too little to contain them;
Each graſping at a kingdom for himſelf.
But, art thou ſo diſpos'd; to Harry—go
Lay ope thy honeſt heart, and in return,
He'll take thy head. How weak is this impatience!
I'm ever bound to Mortimer and thee;
But let us not run headlong into ruin.
Fortune's a fickle miſtreſs and a coy one:
Let us, attentive, wait her lucky minute:
'Tis hers to ſhape occaſion, ours to ſeize it.

Cam. Impatience! ſay'ſt thou? canſt thou, Scroop, foreſee
A glimſe of aught that in the womb of time
May yield a fairer ſeaſon for ſucceſs?
Thou know'ſt we've many ſtaunch and loyal friends;
And what will boot delay? revenge hath ſigh'd
Unſatisfied too long; and deſperate ills
Demand a deſperate cure.

Scroop. I'll tell thee what.
Thou know'ſt the enormous riches of the clergy
Have ſet the envious barons on their backs;
Who mean, th' enſuing parliament, to ſtrip
The church of half its overgrown poſſeſſions.
This, with the late encroachments of the pope,
That gall the king, as touching his prerogative,
Will likely raiſe commotions in the realm,
And form diviſions, we may profit by.

Cam. As how?

Scroop. Thou muſt, by all means, chime in with the clergy;

And raiſe an intereſt in the court of Rome.
Aſſu e the lega'e of your pious zeal,
And that of Mortimer, to th' holy ſee;
Forgetting not how willing he'd have been,
If England's king, to yield the nomination
Of biſhops and their ſpiritual hangers-on,
Throughout the kingdom, to his holineſs:
Hinting beſide th' payment of the allegiance
And tribute firſt exacted of king John.

Cam. How may this ſpeed?

Scroop. The clergy on our ſide,
Should our young king break alſo with the French,
As in all likelihood he raſhly will,
The ſtate in ferment, Rome and France our friends,
Something may be attempted with ſucceſs.

Cam. By heav'n, Lord Scroop, thou haſt a plotting head.
In ſuch a criſis, what may not be done?

Scroop. Mean-while, I undertake to urge the king
In his reſentment 'gainſt both Rome and France.
But huſh, begone—of this another time.
Yon goes the king. I'm bidden to his cloſet:
Belike on ſecret buſineſs.—When we meet,
Hold we in publick, ever diff'rent minds.
Diſſimulation as the means is honeſt,
When honeſt is the end we mean t' obtain.

Cam. Well, as I hope our time is neanat hand,
I will diſſemble, ſmother up my thoughts,
And mutter as diſcreetly as I may. [Exit *Cambridge.*

SCENE VII.

Lord *Scroop*, ſolus.

I fear this raſh-tongu'd Cambridge will not wait
The ſetting on. A hot-brain'd cuckold 'tis,
That ſees not into th' mill-ſtone tho' I pick it.
He dreams of England's c.own in right of's wife,
O'er whom I reign, the ſecret paramour
Could I ſhake Lancaſter's tall houſe to th' ground,
Cambridge and Mortimer might tumble too,
And both be timely buried in the ruins.
And then who knows (things ſtranger have been known)
But I, her wedded Lord, may mount the throne.
[Exit.

SCENE VIII. A *Street.*

Enter an *Officer* of the king's houſhold, and a *Friar.*

Offic. There, good friar, thou haſt it: it would indeed little conduce to raiſe the king's wiſdom in the general eſtimation of the world, to have it thought in the power of ſuch unworthy men as Falſtaff and his fellows, to lead him implicitly into all thoſe extravagancies under which the character of his youth ſuffer'd: and yet ſo it would go near to be ſuſpected, if his highneſs ſhould now act towards them with an ill-tim'd ſeverity.

Friar. Son, well obſerv'd: I commend, therefore, my Lord-chief-juſtice's prudence, in treating their wickedneſs as infirmity, and will readily undertake to commune with them, on the grievous enormity of their diſſolute lives. I have already a goodly peninent in a fair ſhe-companion of his highneſs.

Offic. A ſhe-companion! who is that?

Friar. I may not tell her name, unleſs indeed to a friend, under the veil of ſecreſy. Thou knew'ſt Ned Poins: he had a ſiſter——

Offic. A fav'rite of the prince, belike. I never heard of this before; his highneſs then, it ſeems, had diſcretion in his wildneſs.

Friar. This wench is alſo of ſuch good accompliſhments, that 'tis no wonder he ſhould pay her deference.

Offic. Nay, it appears the king held Poins in leſs diſdain than any of his fellows, by his providing him with an honourable poſt, unleſs——

Friar. Yet this thou ſeeſt he has done prudently, by placing him at a diſtance from his perſon.

Offic. That's true; and yet, for all that, if one might whiſper the truth, Poins is perhaps more indebted, for his preferment, to his ſiſter's beauty, than his own deſerts.

Friar. With this we've naught to do. Let us not hint at cenſure now; having ſo juſt cauſe, from his highneſs's ſudden reformation, to be thankful that England is ſo well king'd.

Offic. Therefore, good father Paul, to the buſineſs in hand.—My Lord-chief-juſtice would have you begin with Sir John Falſtaff, the captain-general and ring-leader of this vicious troop. If you can diſpoſe him to any good, ſomething may be hoped for in the reſt.

Friar.

Friar. I will uſe the means; and yet that Falſtaff has been untoward from his youth up. I knew him, when a boy and page to Mowbray, duke of Norfolk; even then he ſurpaſſed in roguery all the unlucky pages about the court. For indeed he had a ſhrewd wit: but what a miſerable uſe he has made of it!—Well, heav'n pardon him.

Offic. And convert him too, good father.

Friar. Amen to that. But, pray, where am I to find this wicked knight? I am told he is ſeldom out of ſome houſe of carnal recreation: muſt I teach morality in a bawdy-houſe?

Offic. There are few places, father, where it is more wanting.

Friar. But the honour of my function—I may perhaps be indecently inſulted.

Offic. Of that you need not be afraid. The eye of the law is on them, and they will no doubt ſtand on their good behaviour; being ſenſible it is only through the lenity of my Lord-chief-juſtice, that the king's order of baniſhment is not rigorouſly executed againſt them.

Friar. I will attend theſe reprobates.

Offic. His lordſhip would have you bring Falſtaff over to retire into a monaſtery, if poſſible; but thou wilt ſee what may beſt be done with him; and on thy report his Lordſhip's farther pleaſure will be known. Farewel, good father, I will ſee thee again at the priory.

[Exit *Officer.*

Friar. God be with you, ſon,

SCENE IX. *Street* continued.

Friar, ſolus.

I will go; but I fear my miſſion will prove as fruitleſs as that of many other Apoſtles, ſent among the infidels. As there is no danger of martyrdom, however, I am content.—Perſuade Sir John Falſtaff to turn monk! could I work miracles, indeed, and, like St. Thomas, turn an Ethiop white, ſomething might be ſaid for it; but, as it is, I deſpair of converting an old deboſhee from two ſuch prevailing hereſies as the whore and the bottle. *Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE X. *Street* continued.

Enter Juſtice *Shallow* and Maſter *Slender*.

Slen. I wonder now, coz; when you know what a deſperate kind of a horrible man Sir John is, you ſhould—

Shal. Tut—Tut—I fear him not; there's ne'er a Sir John Falſtaff in the nation ſhall over-reach me.

Slen. But what's done cannot be help'd, coz; he over-reach'd you now, as I take it, when you lent him the money.

Shal. Well, couſin of mine, then it is my turn now to over-reach him, and get it again.

Slen. That, indeed, couſin Shallow, to be ſure would be quite right; tit for tat, as we ſay in the country; but then he is ſuch a bloody-minded caitiff; you know he broke my head once for nothing at all: and if he ſhould get an inkling that you are going to law with him, O Lord, O Lord, I ſhall never ſleep in quiet again.

Shal. Poh, you chit, if he breaks the peace, I ſhall know what to do with him, I warrant ye.

Slen. Ay, there indeed, couſin, ecod, I did not think of that. If I am in fear of my life, I can anſwer taking him up with a warrant, and binding him over to his good behaviour. Suppoſe, therefore, coz, we ſwear the peace againſt him firſt, and lay him faſt by the heels before we enter the action —And yet I don't know, if I might adviſe ye, I would waſh my hands of him, and thank God I was rid of a knave.

Shal. And ſo loſe my thouſand pound!

Slen. If I might adviſe ye, coz.

Shal. And ſhall a chit, a cullion, a beardleſs boy, preſume to adviſe Robert Shallow, Eſq? To your a, b, c, your primmer, to ſchool again. Adviſe me! do you think I will loſe a thouſand pound by e'er a ſwaggering knight in England?

Slen. Nay, I ſay nothing, couſin Shallow; but I know a little of the law. I did not live ſo long with my uncle Lingerſuit for nothing. I know he uſed to ſay none of his clients got any thing by it, but loſſes. Mind, I ſay nothing; but don't you remember the picture that us'd to hang up in goody Undone's ſtone parlour?

parlour? (ſhe was one of my uncle's clients too) of the man, I mean, that loſt his doublet, in going to law for his cloak. There was another picture too——

Shal. Don't tell me——

Slen. Of the dog and the ſhadow. I have heard them explained; marry, good morals; good morals, couſin Shallow.

Shal. Talk not to me. I tell thee, I will ſpend half my eſtate before the raſcally knight ſhall carry it off ſo. I had rather the inns of court ſhould ſhare the money among them than let that gor-bellied knave feaſt his enormous guts at any free coſt of mine. I will to my counſel immediately.

Slen. You know beſt, to be ſure, couſin Shallow, but——

Shal. But me no buts, I ſay, but come along;
Your couſin Shallow puts up no ſuch wrong.

[*Exeunt.*

End of the firſt Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Tavern.

Falſtaff ſitting at a table; *Bardolph* attending.

Fal. COME, fill me another glaſs, Bardolph. Where are the women?

Bar. They are gone home, Sir John, that they may get ready to attend your honour in the evening. They went away while you was aſleep.

Fal. Come on then, drink; we will empty the flaſk, and follow. Here's to our better fortune. *(Drinks.)*

Bar. Ah, Sir John, I am afeard our fortune hath been at its higheſt flood. We have ſeen our beſt days.

Fal. So the world goes, Bardolph. Up and down! But is it not hard now? I that have——but that's nothing. I hate boaſting. It is, however, well known what pains I have taken to make a man of that Hal. Nay, you yourſelf are privy to many the good offices I have done him. Before the younker knew me, he knew nothing. The ſneak cup could not drink ſack; made

made conſcience of going to church on holidays; and bluſh'd like a ſcarlet cloak, at entering a bawdy-houſe. Then he made a poor hand at cards and dice, and was a mere novice, a very noodle, at a robbery on the highway. I inſtructed him in all theſe manly exerciſes. I was content to win his money, to teach him gaming: to get drunk myſelf to make him ſo: to teach him ſabbath-breaking by going ever to the church with a chimney in it,—the tavern. And then again, mercy on this round body of mine! how have I been pox'd to teach his ſmock-face whoring? Nay, ſetting rotten limbs and dignity aſide, have I not even pimp'd for the baſhful rogue? Such a prince of Wales! by my troth I was aſham'd of him. Had it not been for me the milk-ſop might have been crown'd before he had loſt his maidenhead.

Bar. And that would have been a pity, Sir John, to be ſure.

Fal. It was I firſt taught him to way-lay the true-man; for I knew him when he durſt not cry *ſtand* to a turkey-cock; nay, a gander, of the ordinary ſize of a green-gooſe, had it met him on a common, would have made him run for it: and yet I would have ſo caſe-harden'd him, that he might have robb'd his father's exchequer. But the toaſt-and-butter would not learn. I went further yet; and would not only have embolden'd his actions, but have taught him the manly arts of converſation. In the ſtile military, for inſtance, or ſwearing.———

Bar. Sir John, I believe, there you forget yourſelf; the prince wanted no aſſiſtance of you in that; for when he was a crack no higher than this, he would ſwear ye as well as a man ſix foot high.

Fal. Right, Bardolph, you are right. I remember me; ſwearing, indeed, he knew: for, tho' but a king's ſon, he would, as thou ſay'ſt, rap out an oath like an emperor. But then for the quinteſſence of all elocution, the uſe of the hyperbole, vulgarly call'd lying; there I am a maſter, yet what a deal of pains it hath coſt me to teach Hal to lie; and all thrown away upon him. He would never do it roundly. He had no genius that way.

Bar.

Bar. You know, Sir John, the prince never could away with lying. He us'd to ſay 'twas beneath a gentleman and a ſoldier.

Fal. Well, well, he will never ſhine in the recital of his own exploits as Xenophon, Cæſar, and I have done.

Bar. Why, Sir John, to be ſure, you have done ſomething.

Fal. Something! the ſervices I have done him and his father are out of number. Methinks my behaviour in the ever memorable action at Shrewſbury, ſhould make him bluſh at his ingratitude. Who kill'd Hotſpur? Did not I give him his death's wound in the thigh? Was it not I who took priſoner that fiery dragon Coleville? and that even alive? And am I thus requited? Is this the guerdon of my great atchievements? Hang valour, I'll hack my ſword no more. Thus has it ever been the fate of merit to be rewarded. Alcibiades and Belliſarius for that!

Bar. Ay, Sir John, they were tall fellows: they were ſadly us'd indeed: I have heard of them. But that was in king John's time, I think.

Fal. They were the Falſtaffs of antiquity, Bardolph.

Bar. Like enough, Sir John: they were before my time, to be ſure; though Piſtol told me, t'other day, that general Belliſarius was his god-father.

Fal. Piſtol is an ignorant braggard; an aſs: I have injur'd my dignity by aſſociating with raſcals, not worthy to wait at my heels. What tell'ſt thou me of Piſtol?

Bar. Nay, Sir John, I meant no harm. I do think you deſerve to be made a lord of indeed.

Fal. A lord! I expected to have been made nothing leſs than an earl or a duke, I can aſſure ye. And then, for my well known œconomy, to have had the ſole management of the exchequer, at leaſt.

Bar. And inſtead of that to be baniſh'd——

Fal. I know not if I heard the word baniſh. I was forbidden, indeed, to come near the king's perſon by ten miles; but I was not at that diſtance when thoſe injunctions were laid on me. Quere now (it might poſe a caſuiſt let me tell ye) whether I am thereby injoin'd to march right out, ten miles an end; whether the negative, *not come*, amounts to the poſitive, *go*—I will not

not underſtand it ſo; and, if that be my Lord-chief-juſtice's conſtruction, by the Lord, I will put him to the trouble of carrying of me: I will be laid up with the gout ere I budge a foot.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, the king did ſay, baniſh.

Fal. Admit it: unleſs he means to reſide for ever in a place, and be in his own proper perſon as immoveable as a church, I hold my life on a damn'd precarious tenure. He muſt give me timely notice of his motions, that I may regulate mine accordingly; otherwiſe, if he be travelling my way, we may happen to encounter, and I get myſelf hang'd through inadvertency. I do not think it ſafe, therefore, to ſtir out of town, without more explicit orders. Fill me another glaſs.

Bar. The flaſk is out, Sir John.

Fal. Out! we have no longer any buſineſs here, then. Pay the drawer, Bardolph, and come along.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in the King's Palace.

Enter King *Henry* and Lord *Scroop*.

King. Thou didſt obſerve, in th' eaſt iſle of the abbey,
A wench that fainted as we paſs'd along,
And drew a crowd of our obſervers from us.

Scroop. I did, my liege: methought a fairer damſel
Mine eyes had ne'er beheld; when lo! o'th'ſudden,
Her looks were chang'd, the roſes left her cheeks,
And down ſhe ſunk, as if unpitying death
Had laid his clay-cold hand upon her heart.

King. Wiſt you the cauſe?

Scroop. I gueſs no other than the ſweltry crowd,
Affecting oft ſuch tender-faſhion'd dames,
Oppreſs'd her gentle ſpirits: for I mark'd
An elegance and ſoftneſs in her features,
That ſpoke the delicacy of her frame.

King. O Scroop, it is indeed a gentle ſoul;
She was the earlieſt fav'rite of my youth,
I her firſt love, and many an happy hour,
In all th'endearing intercourſe of ſouls,
We've paſs'd together.

Scroop.

Scroop. My gracious liege,
Your highneſs young, the damſel in her bloom,
Where could love find itſelf more fit employment.
King. Thou know'ſt, lord Scroop, our preſent reſolution,
To caſt off th'idle follies of our youth:
Hence our command to baniſh from the court
The lewd companions of thoſe boyiſh days.
Now this fair wench is ſiſter to Ned Poins,
Whom I have late provided for i'th'North:
And, for I would not ſee the girl again,
I gave her ghoſtly father late in charge
To place her in a ſiſterhood of nuns,
With an allowance of five hundred marks
A year for life. I thought her cloiſter'd up,
And wonder'd much to ſee her in the abbey.
Scroop. She meant, no doubt, to move your highneſs's pity;
And not unlikely but that ſhew of grief,
And mock of ſwooning was a female trick,
An artifice that's common with theſe giglots.
King. I judge not ſo; but, be that as it may,
I will not have my purpoſes delay'd,
Nor firm reſolves capriciouſly diſputed.
Go to her, therefore, thou, my friendly Scroop,
And ſay, her unexpected diſobedience
Awakes our high diſpleaſure.
Scroop. I will, my liege; yet, by your highneſs' leave,
Thinks not your majeſty ſhe's yet too young,
Too fair, and too enamour'd of the world,
To turn recluſe, and hide her in a cloiſter?
I warrant ye, my liege, a luſty lover
Would find a hearty welcome with her yet.
King. My lord of Maſham, there I hold you wrong her.
She is indeed moſt loving, kind, and gentle:
And yet I think not more than ſhe is true:
Faithful of heart, ſincere as open day,
A veſtal's modeſty ſits on her brow,
And awes ev'n bold licentiouſneſs to ſilence.
She feels, I fear, too anxiouſly th'effect
Of that neceſſity that caus'd our parting.

Scroop.

Scroop. Where, in the name of wonder, did ſhe learn
Thoſe dainty manners? of her brother Ned?
Your majeſty in truth is much deceiv'd;
Had not yourſelf ſo highly done her honour,
Some humbler lover had, perhaps, prevail'd,
And ſhar'd her favours on as eaſy terms.

King. Thou knew'ſt her not.

Scroop. My liege, I know the ſex,
And judge not women by the things they were.
The kindeſt of them all were veſtals once:
But ſoon as e'er they've learn'd their mother's game,
All that is left of chaſtity's grimace,
Mere affectation, prudery, and pride.

King. You hold them, then, but lightly in eſteem:
But general rules admit exceptions, Scroop.

Scroop. O yes, my liege, perhaps, in twice ten thouſand
One may be found, whoſe mind's of chaſter ſtuff
Than her frail body: but with all the reſt
Body and ſoul go lovingly together.

King. Go then, my lord, and in our gentle Nell
Of twice ten thouſand think thou ſeeſt that one,
Whoſe mind is yet right chaſte. Make known our will,
And in the gentleſt terms your kindneſs may.

Scroop. I will, my liege. [Exit King *Henry.*

SCENE III. *Room* continued.

Lord *Scroop*, ſolus.

A lucky errand to this peerleſs beauty!
I mark'd her in the midſt of her diſtreſs,
And of her ſnowy neck and heaving breaſts
Caught a ſide-glance, that fir'd my eager heart,
And kindled all the ardours of deſire.
That ſhe ſhould turn out Harry's miſtreſs too;
And thence we make no doubt an eaſy conqueſt,
Whate'er his princely vanity ſuggeſts;
This too is fortunate; nor leſs his pride,
That churliſhly devotes thoſe charms to heav'n,
On which himſelf has feaſted till he's tir'd.
Sure a kind beauty ſooner will retreat
Into a lover's arms than to a cloiſter!

And

And yet I may not long detain her thence.
Love's a repaſt, ſo cloying at the beſt,
That appetite ſoon leaves the keeneſt gueſt;
To me the banquet of her charms be given,
And, ſated once, I'll yield them too to heav'n. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *A Street.*

Enter Juſtice *Shallow*, Maſter *Slender*, and a *Lawyer*.

Shal. And ſo, maſter Pleadwell, that is your opinion. If it be ſo, my money's gone.

Law. Indeed, I am of that opinion, juſtice Shallow.

Shal. What! how! that my money's gone?

Law. Nay, I know not that. I ſay, I am of opinion you ſhould have taken a bond, or obligation, at the time of lending it, friend Shallow. A thouſand pound on the bare word of a courtier; and that courtier Sir John Falſtaff! ne'er an alderman in the city of London would have lent a thouſand pence on ſuch ſecurity.

Slen. Oh that ever country 'ſquire ſhould have leſs wit than a city alderman!

Law. A thouſand pound, Mr. Shallow, is———

Shal. A thouſand pound. I know it is, maſter Pleadwell, I know it well. But pray now, is there no method in the law to recover it? He cannot have ſpent it yet: cannot we compel him to reſtitution? Arreſt him—arreſt him, Mr. Pleadwell.

Law. But, ſhould he deny the debt, how will you prove it? and who knows, on ſuch an emergency, what Sir John Falſtaff will not do?

Shal. Nay, he will lye: that's the truth on't.

Slen. Ay, coz, and that moſt conſumedly too.

Shal. I can prove his receipt of the money.

Law. But the conditions, juſtice Shallow.—What have you to ſhew that he is engag'd to return it? and when?

Shal. Nothing, I was weak enough to lend it him on his bare word.

Slen. Nay, couſin Shallow, not ſo neither. I'll be ſworn he borrow'd it upon his oath. I'll take my bible ſacrament of that. Didn't I hear Sir John ſwear?—Yes, Mr. Pleadwell, I myſelf, in *propria perſona*, heard Sir John, alias John Falſtaff, knight, *viva voce*, *viva voce*, Mr.

Mr. Pleadwell—Go to—I know a little of the law.—I ſay, I heard the aforeſaid Falſtaff ſwear and proteſt to my couſin Shallow (videlicet Robert Shallow of Glouceſterſhire, Eſq; juſtice of the peace, and of the quorum) upon the honour of a true knight, to give him a thouſand pound again; and beſides that, the comings-in of a better thing, in his Majeſty's court at London.

Law. Ah, Maſter Slender, theſe knights have juſt honour enough to ſwear by; but, for any thing further, I am apprehenſive we ſhall find him one of thoſe honourable knights, whoſe word is as good as their oath. But ſee, if I miſtake not, yonder he comes; this encounter may perhaps ſave us the trouble of attending him at home. Let us ſpeak him fair, and perſwade him, if poſſible, to ſign an obligation for the money. If we can do that, we may trounce him. Let me alone with him.

Slen. O would you could Mr. Pleadwell! what would I give methinks to ſee him well trounc'd! if it was only for giving me once a bloody coxcomb.

SCENE V. *Street* continued.

Enter *Falſtaff*.

Fal. How! Maſter Shallow conſulting with his lawyer! are ye thereabouts friend Shallow? would you hammer me with an action? *(Aſide.)* I will paſs them by. *Going.*

Shal. Sir John, Sir John, a word with you if you pleaſe.

Fal. O my good friends Robert Shallow, Eſq; and Maſter Slender! how fare ye gentlemen both?

Law. Sir John, Mr. Shallow here has——

Fal. Ha! what mine old acquaintance Maſter Wheedlepoint! how is it with your health, Maſter Wheedlepoint?

Law. Pleadwell is my name, Sir John.

Fal. Right.—I cry you mercy.—Roundabout Pleadwell, I think. My memory is not ſo retentive as——

Law. No offence, Sir John: that is not the caſe.

Fal. Marry but it is, Mr. Pleadwell; a treacherous memory is my great defect: and a miſnomer in law thou knoweſt——

Law.

Law. Would be matter of conſequence Sir John. But that is not our buſineſs at preſent. Mr. Shallow here hath put a caſe.———

Fal. Ay, Maſter Shallow ſhould know ſomething of the law too. Was not he at Clement's-inn when thou wert firſt enter'd there? That muſt be many years ago, Mr. Pleadwell —Let me ſee. How many years ago muſt that be, Maſter Shallow?—Why you carry your age well, Mr. Pleadwell.

Shal. Pretty well, pretty well, Sir John, but that—

Fal. Nay marry, I ſay, very well, Maſter Shallow. And pray what is become of young Puzzlecauſe, and Dick Silvertongue, your fellow ſtudents there? they were call'd to the bar, I ſuppoſe. That Dick was a prate-a-pace rogue; and a devil among the bona robas. He and Maſter Shallow here were two with the wenches. Ha, Maſter Shallow!

Shal. No matter, Sir John, at preſent we would confer on other buſineſs.

Fal. Nay, gentlemen, if ye are on buſineſs, I crave your pardon, and leave ye. I am not us'd to be impertinent.

Law. You are not a going, Sir John; it is with you our buſineſs lies.

Fal. Buſineſs with me!

Shal. Yes, about the thouſand pound, Sir John.

Fal. What mean you, Maſter Shallow?

Shal. That you borrow'd of me, Sir John.

Slen. Yes, Sir John, the thouſand pound you borrow'd of my couſin Shallow, Sir John.

Fal. Take me with ye, gentlemen, both; let me underſtand ye. You preſented me, indeed, with a thouſand pound to promote your intereſt at court, Maſter Shallow; and may depend on it, if I can ſerve you—

Shal. Fiddle, faddle, Sir John, I expect my money again: your intereſt at court is not worth a farthing.

Fal. I cannot help that; the more is my misfortune, Mr. Shallow; you ſee my heart is good.

Law. If ſo, Sir John, you will not refuſe to give Mr. Shallow ſomething to ſhew for his money, under your hand.

Fal. How doſt thou know that Mr. Pleadwell? I muſt conſult my counſel in this caſe.

Law.

Law. There is no need, Sir John; I will draw up a little inſtrument, to which thou wilt ſet thy hand immediately.

Fal. Not while I have a head, Maſter Pleadwell, I like not running hand over head in theſe matters. By latter Lammas, or ſaint Falſtaff's day, I may perhaps bethink me.

Law. I know of no ſaint of thy family in the kalendar, Sir John.

Fal. Well, well, there may be ſaints of a worſe. Our merit hath not ſtood in the way of promotion; that's all: and yet there are as many whoremaſters there as lawyers, I believe. But I cannot tarry now to hold farther queſtion with thee; fatigued as I am, and earneſt to reach my lodgings yonder.

Law. If thou wilt there ſign the inſtrument, Sir John, we will attend you thither.

Fal. Wilt thou? it is a notorious bawdy-houſe.

Law. No matter, Sir John.

Fal. No matter, ſayſt thou? Is it then no matter for one of the grave ſages of the law to be ſeen in a public bawdy houſe? Lord, Lord, what will this world come to! My conſcience, however, is more tender: I ſhould be ſorry to give ſuch occaſion of ſcandal.

Law. Pleaſe you, Sir John, to be ſerious. Let us rightly underſtand each other.

Fal. With all my heart, good Maſter Pleadwell; then, to be plain with you, I find you do not know me. You talk to me of reſtitution and conditions; did'ſt thou ever know Sir John Falſtaff make reſtitution on any conditions? And doſt thou think me ſo unpractis'd a courtier as to return the perquiſites of my calling, becauſe I am turn'd out; or to reſtore the purchaſe of my good will, becauſe I am not likely to get in. What take ye me for a younker? a geck? Go to—you cannot play upon me.—Maſter Shallow, reſt you content: your money is in good hands; and, if I do not ſpend it like a gentleman, never truſt me with a thouſand pound again.

Shal. Oh! that I ever did truſt ſuch a caitiff!

Law. But, pray, were theſe the conditions, Mr. Shallow? Was you to be repaid by a place at court?

Slen. To be ſure. Why what do you think, Mr. Pleadwell, couſin Shallow was fool enough to lend a thouſand pound for nothing? Why, I, myſelf, was to be made a great man too; and that into the bargain.

Shal. Couſin Slender, ſpeak in your turn, I pray you.

Law. Were theſe terms ſpecified?

Fal Not indeed on parchment, *ſignatum et ſigillatum*, Mr. Pleadwell A courtier's promiſe is not, indeed, very good in law. But I can tell ye the poſts I ſhould have procur'd for theſe noble 'ſquires: and by'r lady, thou wilt ſay they would have been well occupied. Having a little pique or ſo at my lord chief-juſtice, and Mr. Shallow, here, thinking himſelf qualified, I promis'd him my intereſt for his worſhip's removal from the quorum to his lordſhip's place on the bench. Was it not ſo, Mr. Shallow?

Shal. Don't belye me, Sir John, don't cheat me of my money, and laugh at me too. Robert Shallow eſquire will not put up with that.

Fal. Then for Mr. Slender here, I purpos'd for his addreſs and elocution, to have got him appointed orator to the houſe of parliament; or otherwiſe, in conſideration of his figure and magnanimity, to have made him a ſtaff officer, or captain of horſe at the leaſt.

Slen. Nay, Sir John, you did not tell me what; but I expected ſome notable place, I'll aſſure ye: for I look upon myſelf, plain 'ſquire as I ſtand here, to be ſomebody.

Shal. Coz, coz, you are an aſs, coz.

Slen. Why, why, I didn't lend him any money; I.

Law. Juſtice Shallow, this is a very ſimple affair. I am ſorry it is not in my power to ſerve you in it. Sir John, if you had either honour or honeſty, you would reſtore the money; but, as you make pretenſions to neither, I leave you.

[Exit *Lawyer.*

SCENE VI. *Street* continued.

Falſtaff, Shallow, and *Slender.*

Fal. Well, my maſters, you hear the counſel learned in the law. Will you to ſupper with me? You ſhall ſee

I

I am no niggard. If you will lodge with me in Eaſtcheap, you ſhall ſee the thouſand pound fairly ſpent in ſack: you ſhall ſhare with me to the utmoſt farthing. But for dry reſtitution, I have not been accuſtom'd to it of many years. You would not have me a changeling at this time of day, I hope, Maſter Shallow.

Shal. Changeling! no, Sir John, thou art no changeling; but, depend on it, I will not put up this wrong. Robert Shallow, eſq; will neither eat nor drink with thee. I will have further advice, and, if the law will not help me, I will take other methods. I will have my money; depend on't I will have my money.

[Exit *Shallow.*

Slen. Ay, ay, we ſhall find means to get the money; never fear. [Exit *Slender.*

SCENE VII. *Street* continued.

Falſtaff, ſolus.

Nay, I fear it not—at leaſt before I ſhall have found means to ſpend it: and then, get it who may; it concerns not me. We ſhall ſee, however, whoſe buſineſs will be done firſt. Mine will go merrily forward. Ah! ſhallow Maſter Shallow! But who could have thought the ſnipe would have went to counſel, to get himſelf laugh'd at? Then to ſee how demurely Sir Slyboots angled for me, as if I had been a gudgeon! How cunningly the raſcally barrador would have hook'd me on his inſtrument! But I was even with the methodical knave.—My friend Shallow will never bring it to bear an action at law; and if he ſhould, as I have the caſh, I am on the right ſide of the hedge. Indeed, were I to go to law for a mint of money, I would chuſe to have it all in my poſſeſſion. There is nothing like it. Poſſeſſion is the very life's blood of a bad cauſe: on the ſtrength of which in mine, I will home to ſupper.

[*Exit.*

SCENE VIII. A *Tavern* in *Eaſtcheap.*

Enter *Bardolph*, *Mrs. Quickly*, and *Dol. Tearſheet.*

Bar. He will be here incontinently, hoſteſs: I only ſtept before to let you know he was a coming.

Quick. But is it veritably true, Bardolph, that Sir John has got a thouſand pound by him?

Dol Ay, is that true, Bardolph?

Bar. True, upon honour; he had it of juſtice Shallow of Glouceſterſhire; and it lies now in maſter Gingle caſh, the banker's hands. But Sir John will be here mon entably. Is ev'ry thing ready?

Quick. In a minute we are all clear. Run, good Dol, and receive the knight at the door. Francis! what, Francis!

Fran. (without) Anon, anon, Sir.

Quick. Light up candles in the paſſage. A bottle of ſherris, Francis, quick, you ſleeping knave.—Always upon a ſnail's gallop! O that ever woman ſhould be plagued with ſuch creeping varlets!

Dol. O, here is Sir John, himſelf.

SCENE IX. *Tavern* continued.

Enter Sir *John Falſtaff.*

Quick. Jaded to death, I warrant!—An eaſy chair, good Bardolph. Pleaſe you to depoſe yourſelf, Sir John.

Fal. Soh! now have I taken up my ſitting again, in my old quarters. A glaſs of ſherris, Francis!

Dol. And how do you find yourſelf, my ſweet knight?

Fal Tolerably thirſty, (*Drinks*) I can drink; and that is all the bodily functions I am capable of. I am as ſtiff, ev'ry part about me, as a walking taylor or Don Diego on a ſign poſt.

Dol Nay, Sir John, if that be the caſe, it is not over with you yet. Give me a buſs.

Fal. Go, Dol, you are riggiſh—get you gone you water-wag tail, you; I am not merrily diſpos'd.

Dol. But, will you give me a new kirtle at Bartlemew fair?

Fal. I will, Dol.—Nay, I cannot bear you on my knee

Dol. Why, how came you ſo terribly maul'd, my leman?

Fal. Did not I tell ye?

Quick. No indeed, Sir John, your honour ſpoke of fatigue; but did not deſcend to particles. Your honour fell aſleep, you know.

Fal.

Fal. Well then, I will tell ye now. Give me firſt a glaſs of ſherris. *(Drinks)* You muſt know that, after the king (hang him for a ſheep-ſtealing cur) gave me that rebuff I told you of; he ſtalk'd magiſterially away, and left me to the mercy of the multitude: when, as I ſtood parleying with mine antient; mine arms a-kembo thus; a knot of elbowing earls bore me down before them, with the impetuoſity of a torrent. Lo! there was I, jamm'd faſt in the midſt of a vile groupe of mechanics, as if we had grown together in a body corporate: and in this jeopardy was I carried along; ſometimes bolſter'd up on all ſides, at the confluence of ſeveral turnings, like a Maypole; and at others, wire-drawn between two ſtone-walls, as if they meant to make chitterlings of me: now this fair round belly taking the form of a chriſtmas pie, and by and by preſs'd as flat as a pancake. It is a miracle I did not burſt in the midſt of them. Had it not been for the ſufficiency of my buff doublet, I ſhould have certainly burſted.

Dol. If you had, Sir John, you would have went off with a report like a bladder.

Fal. A bladder, ye jade, a demi-culverin at leaſt. I ſhould have died an hero: my exit would have made ſome noiſe in the world.

Quick. Heav'n forbid, Sir John, you ſhould ever die a virulent death I ſay.

Dol. I hope, indeed, ſweet knight, you will never be preſs'd to death. That muſt be an odd end, and yet methinks I could bear much.

Fal. I'll be ſworn thou could'ſt, Dol: but thou art a woman, and made to bear.

Quick. Yes, in good ſooth, poor woman is made to bear ev'ry thing. She muſt ſuffer all a man's ill humours; let 'em lie never ſo heavy upon her: and by my truly ſome men are nothing elſe. But, to be ſure, Sir John, you was us'd moſt unhumanly. Would nobody take pity upon you?

Fal. Pity! the moſt remorſeleſs raſcals! they made no more of me than if I had been a lump of dough, they were kneeding to make dumplings of: and to expoſtulate with the villains would have been preaching to the winds.

Dol. Why did not you exert your courage, Sir John? draw upon them?

Fa'. Draw, ſayſt thou? I could not come at my rapier, to be maſter of a kingdom. And as for good words,—in return for the few I gave them, they let fly their jeſts ſo thick at me, and pepper'd me ſo plaguely with ſmall wit, that I was dumbfounded.

Dol. I thought you would never have been overmatch'd that way, Sir John.

Fal. Yet ſo it was, Doll. They were holiday-wits, and came loaden with choke pears: but, indeed, I was overpower'd by numbers. Two to one, Doll, you know—They pelted me from all quarters. Will you hear: I will give you a ſpice of their ſarcaſms; a ſample of the gibing pellets they threw at me. As I was thus ſtemming the tide and crying out for the lord's ſake, a dried eel's-ſkin of a fiſhmonger aſk'd me how I could complain of the crowd. "Is a porpoiſe ill at eaſe, ſaid he, "amidſt a glut of ſprats and herrings?" I had not time to anſwer the ſmelt, before a barber-ſurgeon, the very model of the ſkeleton in his glaſs caſe, offered to tap me for the dropſy; and to make us all elbow-room by letting out a puncheon of canary at my girdle. Right, cries a third, at the word canary, "I'll be hang'd if "anything be in the doublet of that fat rogue but hog's-"ſkins of Spaniſh wine;" and incontinently they roar'd out, on all ſides, "Tap him, there,—tap him, maſter "ſurgeon ——'Sblood; I was forc'd to draw in my horns, and be ſilent; leſt the villains, being thirſty, ſhould force the ſhaver to operation. The knave, indeed, was five weavers off, and ſo could not well come at me; I might otherwiſe have been drunk up alive.

Dol. Indeed, my witty knight, you was match'd.

Fal. Wasn't I, Dol?

Dol. And pray how cam'ſt thou off at laſt, Sir John?

Fal. By mere providence: for, after the barbarous raſcals had ſqueez'd the breath out of my body, they buffetted me becauſe I could not roar out, God ſave the king. At length, I know not how, they threw me down in the cloiſters, where, falling croſs-wiſe and the way being narrow, I fairly block'd up the paſſage: upon which (for they could not ſtraddle over me) they took another way (a plague go with them!) for fear of loſing the ſhow. And thus I was left to take in wind, and gather myſelf up at leiſure.

Dol.

Dol. And did the mangy villains ſo play upon thy ſackbut? ſo maul this poor round-belly? a parcel of ſapleſs twigs! dry elms, fit only for fuel! I would I had the burning of them.

Fal. Wouldſt thou fire them, Dol? Ha! art thou touch-wood ſtill, Dol?

Dol. Nay, Sir John, not ſo.

Quick. No, I'll be ſworn, Sir John, to my carnal knowledge, if there be truth or faith in medicine. But Sir John, what would your honour pleaſe to have for ſupper?

Fal. Another glaſs of ſherris—fill me out, Bardolph. I cannot eat. I have loſt my appetite by the way. Put an egg into a quart of mull'd ſack, and give it me when I am a-bed. I will to ſleep.

Dol. Would you have your bed prepar'd, ſtrait, Sir John?

Fa. Ay, on the inſtant, good Dol. Hoſteſs! go thou and ſee to the brewage of my ſack.

[Exeunt *Dol.* and Mrs. *Quick'y.*

SCENE X. *Tavern* continued.

Enter *Peto*, leading in *Piſtol*, groaning and hanging his head.

Fal. Heigh; heigh; whoſe other mare's dead?

Piſtol. Come Clotho, Atropos, and ſiſters three! Wind up my web; for Piſtol's flaſh is out.

Fal. What is the matter, Peto?

Peto. Matter, Sir John! The mob at Weſtminſter have almoſt murder'd poor Piſtol, here. I thought I never ſhould have been able to get him home alive.

Fal. And how ſo?

Peto. Why, Sir John, being got upon a cobler's bulk to ſee what was become of your honour, a raw-bon'd ſwaggering ſerjeant, that was coming by, whipt hold of him by the leg, and threw him on the people's heads; where, being no room for him to come to the round, they ſhoulder'd him about from poſt to pillar, as they would have done a hedge-hog, or a dead rabbit that had been thrown among them. I faith, I thought they would have kill'd him.

Fal. How! was that Piſtol? I ſaw the buſtle at a diſtance, but took the cauſe of it for ſome huge boar cat, the porters and 'prentices had got, to make ſport withal. By the Lord, Piſtol, I have a fellow-feeling for thy misfortunes. But art thou hurt? where art thou wounded?

Piſtol. Ah, luckleſs knight! is merit thus repaid?
Doth fortune play the jilt with men of mould?
Then Piſtol lay thy head in Parca's lap.

Fal. Good ancient, let me adviſe thee to hie to bed, and lay thy head on a pillow.—Peto, ſee to him.—I too will follow.—Bardolph!

Light me to bed—let Dol bring up the ſack,
Empty the jorden, and tuck up my back.

[*Exeunt.*

End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

An Antichamber.

Enter Lord *Scroop* and *Friar.*

Scroop. BY th' holy rood, an early riſer, father.

Friar. Each morn, my lord, at crowing of the cock,
It is her wonted cuſtom thus in pray'r
To uſher in the day. But ſee ſhe comes.

[*Enter* Eleanor Poins, *reading.*

Scroop. How fair a penitent! good friar excuſe us.
I have a farewell errand from his highneſs,
Intended only for this lady's ear.

Friar. My lord, I leave her with you. [*Exit* Friar.

SCENE II. *Antichamber continued.*

Lord *Scroop* and *Eleanor.*

Scroop. So early, gentle fair one, at your oriſons!

Elea. Is't not, my lord, my duty to prepare
For th' holy ſtate my fortune waits t'embrace,
By prior acts of penitence and pray'r?

Scroop. O cruel fortune! is't for blooming youth
To ſpend its prime amidſt the doleful gloom

Of

Of ſpleenful ſolitude ; ſhut from the world,
And from the golden joys that wait on beauty ?

Elea. Alas, my lord, my days of joy are paſs'd ;
I have indeed poſſeſs'd too great a ſhare,
And all are fled. But of my lord, the king ;
What errands need ſuch honourable meſſengers ?

Scroop. How cruel is't to rob the world's fair garden
Of flowers ſo ſweet to ſenſe and choice as this !
[*Half aſide.*
Lady, indeed, with pain I recollect
The hated terms of my ungrateful meſſage :
For little thoſe of chiding and reproof
Suit Maſham's gentle nature. Yet the king,
Anger'd to ſee what others joy to look on,
Hath ſent me to remind you of his pleaſure,
And haſten your retirement from the world.
Your late appearance at his coronation,
It ſeems, hath much offended.

Elea. Could that, my lord, be deem'd ſo great a crime ?
To wiſh to ſee my Henry's face again,
Ere yet I bade the flatt'ring world adieu ;
To take one parting look, to drop a tear,
And bid him, with mine eyes, farewell for ever ?

Scroop. Princes, alas ! are not like other men ;
At leaſt ſo flatt'rers buz it in their ears :
While o'er their hearts vain pride uſurps dominion,
And all the gentler paſſions fall before it.

Elea. I ſee, my lord, indeed I ſee it now.
Say, 'twas a fault, my failing heart betray'd me ;
Yet 'twas a venial fault ; the fault of love.

Scroop. The king affects to think you diſobedient.

Elea. And was I ever diſobedient to him ?
His will to me was evermore a law ;
And ſhall be ſtill : for, tho' he caſt me off,
No other's pleaſure will I ſtudy ever.
Let him not think I wiſh to diſobey him ;
Or feel one pang, in parting from the world,
But from the wounds receiv'd by his diſpleaſure.
Let him not think I valued but his love ;
His fame, his honour, equally were dear ;
And mine I've made a ſacrifice to both.

Scroop. O had poſſeſſion of ſo rich a prize,
Such ſtore of beauty, tenderneſs and truth
But fell to Maſham's lot; tho' twice a king,
I would have worn it ever next my heart,
More priz'd than all the jewels in my crown!

Elea. O flatter not, my lord, ſo Henry flatter'd:
So vow'd the prince, when, ſighing at my feet,
He won my eaſy, unſuſpecting heart.

Scroop. O wrong me not; nor wrong thoſe heav'nly charms.
Perdition catch me if I meant to flatter.

Elea What means, my lord?

Scroop. For Henry's heart you've loſt,
To give you mine; a heart that cannot change.
Accept it, love, nor ſay th' exchange is poor;
For conſtancy o'erballances a crown.

Elea. My lord, farewell—is this thy hated errand?
Hated indeed, if Henry ſent thee on it.
Thou art employ'd, I ſee, to try my heart:
It is the king's till his unkindneſs break it.
Ah how unkind! ſo kind while yet a prince!
If thus a golden crown can ſteel his heart,
O may I ne'er behold him while a king!
No—be ſome humble cell my future lot,
Princes and kings, and all but heav'n forgot.

[*Exit* Eleanor.

SCENE III. *Antichamber continued.*

Scroop, ſolus.

Not yet, my fair one: thou muſt firſt be mine;
Or I am wide the mark of woman's will.
I have a tale ſhall work upon the king
To give in charge this wanton up to me;
And if there's ought of woman left about her,
I ſhall find out the means to touch her heart,
And teach her kinder maxims ere we part. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *Tavern in Eaſtcheap.*

Enter *Falſtaff* and *Bardolph.*

Fal. What time of day is it, Bardolph?

Bar. Almoſt eleven, Sir John.

Fal.

Fal. Then have I taken two ſound naps of eight hours a piece. How is it with Piſtol to day?

Bar. Why, he's in a bad way, Sir John.

Fal. That all!—when was he otherwiſe? who ever knew Piſtol or thee in a good way?

Bar. And yet, Sir John, we are your followers, you know.

Fal. Well ſaid, Bardolph.—I ſee thy wit is improv'd. I lead you the way, it is true; but you follow me, like ſpaniels, with damnable circumvolutions. But, whom have we here?

Bar. It is the doctor, Sir John, that has been up to ſee Piſtol.

Fal. O, doctor Mithridate, the apothecary! a precious raſcal! [*Enter Apothecary.*

SCENE V. *Tavern continued.*

Falſtaff, Bardolph, and *Apothecary.*

Fal. So, maſter 'pothecary, thou art a man of merit, I ſee. Thou art ſought after.—How many patients haſt thou diſpatch'd to day?

Apo. Not many, Sir John, I viſited your friend Piſtol early, and flatter myſelf he is in a fair way.

Fal. Bardolph tells me he is in a bad one: fair and good I have heard; but fair and bad never. But pray what are his complaints maſter doctor? I know ſomething of phyſick.

Apo. Why, Sir John, the cutis of the occiput is dilacerated; there are tumours all over the corpus; the patient has a delirium, a vertigo, and beſides the febrile ſymptoms indicate phlebotomy.

Fal. Phlebotomy! what, bleeding?

Apo. A little, Sir John—we will only take from him ſixteen ounces.

Fal. Sixteen ounces! haſt thou a deſign upon his life? What, a plague, wouldſt thou kill him? He doth not weigh four pounds averdupoize, fleſh, bones, and all; and thou wouldſt take him away by quarterns in a ſlop-baſon.

Apo. I hope, Sir John, you will not go about to inſtruct me in the pathology, the therapeutice, the indications

cations and contra-indications. The patient muſt be bled.

Fal. Bled ſick apes and hyp'd monkeys. I tell thee my ancient ſhall die a natural death. Thinkeſt thou I will have his veins drain'd to fill a row of porringers in a barber's ſhop window? Uſe bits of red cloth and be damn'd; ye ſhall have the blood of no follower of mine. Sixteen ounces! I tell thee not Galen, Hippocrates, nor Eſculapius himſelf, were they alive, ſhould thus operate upon him. Phlebotomy! I will phlebotomize ye all with my rapier, by the Lord, if you offer to draw a lancet on him.

Apo Well, well, Sir John, we will take leſs; but ſome his caſe abſolutely requires: and in fact, Sir John, if you yourſelf, being of ſuch a phlethorick habit, would loſe a little blood, it would not be amiſs.

Fal. Me! I thank thee. In the blood is the life of the creature, and I will not conſent to part with mine.

Apo. It were better alſo, Sir John, you drank a little more water in your wine.

Fal. More water! I drink none.

Apo. So much the worſe, Sir John, better you did.

Fal. And wouldſt thou perſuade me, with thy contra-indications, that water is better than wine?

Apo. For ſome conſtitutions, and in ſome caſes, yes, Sir John.

Fal. For thine perhaps: but mine thanks thee for thy water. Wine is good enough for me.

Apo You will not take my advice, Sir John, and ſo good day to ye.

Fal. Good day to you maſter, doctor, 'pothecary.

[*Exit* Apothecary.

SCENE VI. *Tavern continued.*

Falſtaff and *Bardolph.*

Fal. And yet I know not whether I ought to wiſh that neither; for a good day to him muſt be a bad one to ſomebody. A man of any conſcience, or humanity, knows not how to ſalute fellows of ſuch an occupation: for who would wiſh the reſt of mankind lame and blind, ſick and ſorry, to find them employment, forſooth?—Poor Piſtol! I would not loſe him, methinks; for, tho' he be a braggadocio knave, he is an old acquaintance;

and

and I never could find in my heart to part with old acquaintance merely becauſe they were good for nothing. King Hal is another ſort of a man to what I am, to abandon his old friends in his proſperity thus. Poor Piſtol!

Bar. Ecod, Sir John, it happen'd lucky for me, I can tell ye, that I came off ſo well as I did, yeſterday.

Fal. Ay, by'r lady, thou play'dſt fair to get off in a whole ſkin, and leave thy friend and maſter in extremity.

Bar. Nay 'pon my honour, Sir John, I did my utmoſt to keep up with you: but 'twas unpoſſible; and indeed it was very fortunable that I was not myſelf trod to death b' the populous.

Fal. Thou! tell me the moon is a Suffolk cheeſe or a Windſor pear. Thou! Have I not ſeen thee clear the ring, without a ſtaff at a bear-baiting? Thou might'ſt make thy way through a legion, nay the millions of a croiſade: why, who would come within a fathom of that fire-brand, thy noſe? It is a flaming two-edged ſword. Would'ſt thou make me believe the villains would come near thee, to burn their holiday cloaths? Thou would'ſt have ſet them a-blazing like ſtubble, and have conſum'd the whole proceſſion of heralds, like men of ſtraw. A plague upon them, it was in their avoiding thee, I ſuppoſe, that I had like to have died a martyr to corpulency.

Bar. Sir John, you are always plaguing me about my face; what would you have me do with it?

Fal. Do with it! If there were water enough in the Thames, I would have thee quench it. But water, I fear can do nothing for thee; ſince I remember, when we rode laſt from Canterbury, with the rain beating full in our faces, thou cam'ſt into the Borough with thy noſe and cheeks glowing red-hot, altho' they had been hiſſing all the way like a horſe ſhoe or a taylor's gooſe. God forgive me—but when thou rann'ſt behind the hedge, in fear of the officer; I could not help comparing him and thee to Moſes and the burning buſh. But thou wilt in time be conſumed: thy fire muſt out.

Bar. I would it were out, ſo be I might hear no more on't. In troth, Sir John, if I muſt be always your butt, I ſhall ſeek another ſervice I aſſure ye.

Fal. Nay, nay, good Bardolph, that muſt not be. I ſpeak not in diſparagement, heav'n knows: for I mean

to

to cheriſh thee againſt the lack of fuel, or the viſitation of a Dutch winter Thou wilt ſtand me in good ſtead for a ſtove, and ſave me a noble a week in the purchaſe of pit-coal.

Bar. 'Sblood, Sir John, I'll bear it no longer.

[*Going.*

Fal. Hold, Bardolph, where art thou going? thou glow-worm in magnature with thy tail upwards; thou pumpion-headed raſcal, ſtay, or——

Bar. Give me good words, then, Sir John. Why pumpkin-head, pray now?

Fal. Haſt thou never ſeen a pumpion, fantaſtically carv'd and ſet over a candle's-end, on a gate-poſt, to frighten ale-wives from goſſipping by owl light? That is a type of thee—that is thy emblem: thy head being hollow, full of light, and eaſily broken; as thou ſhalt experience, if thou offer'ſt to fly thy colours till diſbanded by authority. I ſhall need thee, I tell thee, to keep me warm under the coldneſs of the king's diſpleaſure.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, burnt ſack and ginger will do you more good: for whatſomever light I may give, I am ſure, ſet aſide choler, I am as cold as e'er a white-liver'd younker in town.

Fal. Cold, ſay'ſt thou! thy face would condemn thee for an incendiary before any bench of judicature in the kingdom! thou wouldſt carry apparent combuſtibles into court with thee. Tell not me of cold. Thou wouldſt certainly have been hang'd long ago, had not the ſheriff been afraid thou wouldſt have fir'd the hangman or the gibbet.

Bar. Why, Sir John, I have been your attendant off and on theſe twenty years, come Candlemas; and I don't find I have had any ſuch effect on you.

Fal. The reaſon, you rogue, the reaſon; am not I oblig'd to keep a pipe of Canary conſtantly diſcharging on me? Are not the tapſters perpetually employ'd? the ſack-buckets for ever a going, to keep me from blazing? And yet at times my ſkin is ſhrivell'd up like an April pippin. Mark me but walking an hundred paces, with thee glowing at my heels, if I do not broil and drip like a roaſting ox.

Bar. Ah, you are pleas'd to be hard upon me, Sir John.

John, but I'm ſure my face never hurt a hair of your head.

Fal. No! look at 'em—hath it not turn'd them all grey? Twenty years ago, before they were calcin'd by thy fire, my locks were of a nut-brown.

Bar. Why, you grow old, Sir John.

Fal. Old! what call ye old? I am a little more than threeſcore: and Methuſalem liv'd to near a thouſand. Why may not I be a patriarch, and beget ſons and daughters theſe hundred years, myſelf?

Bar. Then you muſt get a wife, Sir John, for your common fields, you know, never bear clover.

Fal. Marry! what to be made a cuckold of, I warrant ye?

Bar. Why, Sir John, if you ſhould marry, you would not like to be ſingular, I ſuppoſe.

Fal. Nay, for the matter of that, all's one: but who will have me? Your dames of breeding are too fine and finicking for me to bear with them.

Bar. Ay, or for them to bear you, either, Sir John.

Fal. Nay, whoever has me, ſhe muſt be no tenderling: ſhe muſt be none of your gingerbread laſſes, that will crumble to pieces in the towzling. She muſt be none of your wiſhy-waſhy, panada, gentry neither; your curd and whey gentlefolks, that cannot ſupport the embraces of a ſoldier. I muſt have a kickſy-wickſey of more ſubſtantial ſtuff.

Bar. Why, Sir John, what ſay you to Madam Urſula, your old ſweet-heart? You have courted her to my knowledge theſe twenty years laſt paſt. I ſuppoſe you know her great aunt is dead, and has left her four hundred marks a year.

Fal. No, by the lord, I heard nothing on't. She ſent me a letter into Glouceſterſhire; but, I was over a bottle, and would not interrupt the glaſs to read it. I knew it was her's by the ſuperſcription, which by the way, however, was as unintelligible as the hand-writing on the wall. It had never reached me had not the bearer been a decypherer. Go, Bardolph, and fetch me; you will find it among other trumpery in my cloak-bag. [Exit *Bardolph.*

SCENE

SCENE VII. *Tavern* continued.

Falſtaff, ſolus.

Four hundred marks a year, quoth he! It were not an unreaſonable competence were not ſherris comparatively ſo near. But if the female incumbrance on it ſhould turn out a ſhrew; the lord have mercy on me, in paying off the ſins of my youth. Let me bethink me. Four hundred marks a year! I have, it is true, ſmall hopes from Hal; and ſhall grow old ſome time or other. Theſe aches in my limbs forebode it. I cannot hold out for ever; that's certain. Were it not good, therefore, to make a virtue of neceſſity, and take up while I am in caſe to reap the credit of reformation? Could I reconcile it to my intereſt, I believe my inclination would follow.

SCENE VIII. *Tavern* continued.

Re-enter *Bardolph*.

Bar. There, Sir John, is the letter.

Fal. Come on: let us ſee if we are maſter of ſo much Arabick as to find out her meaning. *(Reads.)* Hum——hum——hum——! Why, dame Urſula, thou haſt a memory. I could have credited thee for ſubtlety, on account of that old friend to woman, the ſerpent; but how thou couldſt remember for fifteen years together what money I owed thee—that indeed I cannot account for. I have myſelf forgot it long ſince. She tells me here, I have borrow'd five hundred pounds of her at times, as tokens of my love. By the Lord, and as I am a ſoldier, I will love her ſtill, and ſhe ſhall command ſemblable proofs of it. *(Reads on)* Hum——hum——Repayment of the money or the performance of my engagements! Hoo! Am I then to be married on compulſion? That will go moſt dambably againſt the grain. But hold—if I marry, her money will be mine: if not, ſhe may ceaſe to lend when ſhe pleaſes; and the fortune of that man is always at the turning of the tide that depends on the caprice of a woman.

Bar. Why marry her, then, Sir John. I dare ſay ſhe has heard nothing of your diſgrace at court; ſo that ſhe won't ſtand upon terms.

Fal

Fal. Marry, Bardolph, and I am half reſolv'd to do ſo. Yea, by the Lord, and I will too. She has beſides two thouſand pounds in money. I will courageouſly make the attack and mount the breach of matrimony. If I fall into the hand of Philiſtines; why, good night. It is but going into Purgatory a few years before my time. Bardolph, get me pen and ink in the cupid. Thou ſhalt be one of love's meſſengers —I will write to her in trope and figure: metaphor and hyperbole carry all before them with the women. Let her reſiſt lies and nonſenſe if ſhe can. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX. An *Apartment* at Court.

Enter King *Henry*, the Earl of *Cambridge*, and Lord *Scroop*.

King. (Entering to *Scroop.*) I thank thee, Scroop,
and to thy zeal and care
Commit the buſineſs of fair Nell's diſpoſal.
Mean time, my lord, on more important matter
I need your honeſt counſel —My good lord Cambridge
Will give me too his thoughts upon the buſineſs.
Cam. My liege, you do me honour.
King. Not a whit.
You heard what late th' archbiſhop mov'd, in council,
Reſpecting the diſpoſal of church benefices.
His grace has laid a paper ſince before us,
Wherein he ſtands up ſtoutly for his temporals.
Scroop. Doubtleſs, my liege, if churchmen had their will,
The beſt of them would never give conſent
To ſtrip the church of its o'ergrown poſſeſſions,
Tho' half the nation's wealth were in her hands.
King. But what is thy opinion honeſt Scroop?
Is't not injuſtice to deprive the church
Of thoſe poſſeſſions dying men have will'd
By legal teſtament?
Scroop. The public good, I hold, my ſov'reign liege,
Should be the firſt great rule of right and wrong:
The rights of individuals hence are ſacred
No longer than conducing to the public.
For your majeſty's, or England's, honour
That half our glebe be holden by the church,

To

To fatten monks, and pamper lazy friars,
That ſwarm like peſtful locuſts o'er the land?

King. What ſaith my lord of Cambridge?

Cam. The point, my liege, is truly nice and tender.
So deep the intereſt of the church is rooted,
While ſuch regard implicitly it claims
From ev'ry true believer, that I doubt
If ſuch a ſtep can with ſucceſs be taken.
I own, I never profited as yet
From ought that Wickliff, or his tribe, have taught;
Holding it ſacrilege to rob the church.

Scroop. Not more than I, my pious earl of Cambridge;
Nor have I profited by Wickliff's doctrine.
But who will call a den of thieves the church?
Why hold we Edward's memory ſo dear,
But that thou knoweſt in his glorious reign
The famous Mortmain ſtatute was enacted:
Happy for England that had elſe, ere now,
A nation been of monaſteries and churches,
Paying allegiance to its king the pope.

King. Ay, Scroop, there lies the ſore. The king, our father,
Out of a holy zeal to mother church,
Slacken'd the reigns of that prerogative
The Edwards held ſo tight upon the clergy.
Hence new encroachments, and a bold contempt,
Of our authority, from Rome.

Cam. As touching this, my liege, the holy ſee
Has doubtleſs gone too far, in granting cures
To monks and laymen, and in diſpenſations
For their non-reſidence, and other articles
Injurious to the honour of the crown.

Scroop. Nor leſs injurious to its intereſt, Cambridge.
Believe me, Rome conſults its profits more
Than that our prieſts deſerve the cure of ſouls!
Say to what end the clergy ſhould be rich,
But to lay out their wealth where it improves.
I do not mean in heav'n, my gracious liege:
They lay not up in ſtore their treaſures there:
But where preferments may be bought—at Rome.
It is to Rome their plate and monies fly,
To fee eccleſiaſtick ſycophants;

To nurſe rebellion; and inflame the minds
Of bigot ſubjects 'gainſt their lawful ſovereigns.
Cam. My liege, the dukes of York and Exeter,
With the young princes, paſs along the gallery.
King Go, bid them in. [Exit *Cambridge.*
Scroop, let this ſubject of the clergy reſt;
I will reſume it at a proper ſeaſon,
And hold thee farther queſtion on the matter.

SCENE X. *Apartment* continued.

Enter *Cambridge*, with the Dukes of *Glouceſter*, *Bedford*, *Clarence*, *York*, and *Exeter*.

King. Well, my good lords, what is the news o'th'day?
Hear we yet nothing from our brother Charles,
Concerning thoſe ſame dukedoms we've requir'd,
O'er which he lords it in our realms of France?
York. As yet, my liege, we've naught but vague reports.
Theſe ſay, indeed, the haughty French affect
To treat your highneſs' claim with proud diſdain:
That Charles refer'd your envoys to the dauphin;
Whoſe meſſengers, already on the way,
May hourly be expected.
King. To the dauphin! I ſent them to the king.
York. Moſt true my liege,
In going hence before your coronation,
'Tis ſaid, weak Charles has taken thence occaſion
To caſt affront upon your royalty.
King. 'Tis well. The dauphin's anſwer ſhall ſuffice.
Would it were come: I long, methinks, to hear
The meſſage Charles himſelf diſdain'd to ſend.
Would not, for his ſake, it ſhould give cauſe
To make him bluſh for his young heir's diſcretion.
The couſin's wit, we're told, is paſſing ſhrewd,
But oft ill-tim'd; and hurtful to his friends.
Him beware—mine was no idle errand:
Well deſerv'd a king's moſt ſerious anſwer.
Exeter. The ſon's diſcretion yet may match the fire's;
But with ſuch unadviſed affectation,
Comes to treat your majeſty ſo lightly.
Scroop. Affect contempt! a ſkipping, meagre tribe!
Shall the ape unpuniſh'd mock the lion?

By

By heav'n, my liege, I would ſo well chaſtiſe them—

King. My lords, our judgment ſtold we in ſuſpenſe
Until theſe French ambaſſadors arrive.
For heav'n defend we ſhould, in pride or wantonneſs,
Awake the fury of grim-viſag'd war,
To wave her bloody banner o'er a kingdom,
And reap, with th' ſword, the harveſt of deſtruction.
Yet, to ſay truth, I cannot flatter me
So fierce and formidable a power as France,
At once, will yield to part with her poſſeſſions,
In pure regard to juſtice and our right,
Reſtoring quietly, upon demand,
Thoſe fertile dukedoms, ſeignories, and towns,
That add the greateſt luſtre to the crown,
And conſtitute the ſtrength of half the kingdom.

York. On that moſt politick and juſt ſuſpicion,
Wiſely your highneſs doth augment your forces;
Levying new pow'rs, to keep in awe the Scots,
And in your abſence curb domeſtick broils;
While, taking meet advantage of the time,
You may by force acquire what force detains.

King. Uncle, this is moſt needful—ſee we, therefore,
Our warlike preparations do not flag.
But we prepar'd, that, as occaſion ſerve,
We may tranſport our powers acroſs the main,
And on the ſpot our rightful cauſe maintain. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE XI. An *Apartment.*

Dame *Urſula*, and *Bridget* attending.

Urſ. And do you think, Bridget, Sir John will at l
be as good as his word, then? How ſits my ruff to-d
I would thou hadſt bought me one of thoſe new-
ſhioned farthingales.

Brid. O, madam, you are mighty fine, as it
truly: and, I am ſure, Sir John can do nothing
than admire you.

Urſ. Thinkeſt thou ſo, Bridget? why, to be certa
a peach-colour'd ſattin does become my complex
hugely. But I think the roſes are faded in my chee
Well, no matter: he might have gather'd them twe
years ago, had not he been a rover. I hope, howe
he has ſown all his wild oats before now, and th

ſhall yet have the ſatisfaction to be call'd my lady Falſtaff.

Brid. To be ſure, madam; and tho' Sir John is but a knight at preſent, he will very aſſuredly, now the young king is crown'd, be made a great lord, and may be a duke. Indeed, madam, I cannot think of leſs.

Urſ. And then ſhall I be a dutcheſs, Bridget. Dame Urſula a dutcheſs!

Brid. Ay, madam, that will be a day to ſee; if I am ſo happy as to be in your grace's favour.

Urſ. For certain, Bridget, thou ſhalt. Well, I muſt confeſs, in ſpite of my bluſhes, I do love Sir John Falſtaff. How like a ſcholar and a gentleman he writes.

[*Takes out a letter, and reads.*

"To my ſoul's idol, the mirror of love and conſtancy." Conſtancy! he might well ſay conſtancy: for who among the gill flirts of theſe days has reſerv'd, like myſelf, the ſame affection for the ſame man for twenty years together? It is true, indeed, I have not had any other offer, in the mean time: but that doubtleſs has been owing to my ſuppoſed engagements with Sir John; that frighten'd away all other young cavaliers. Well, this love is a ſtrange thing! there is Sir John has deceiv'd me a thouſand times, and yet, I know not how, he always perſuaded me he was ſincere.

Brid. A ſure ſign you lov'd him, madam.

Urſ. And yet, to be ſure, before I receiv'd this letter, I thought I never ſhould hear from him again, and had almoſt come to a reſolution to caſt him entirely off.

Brid. In good ſooth, madam, and that is very prudent; to caſt off a lover when we find he will leave us.

Urſ. I think ſo, and not a little imprudent to do it before, for one of my years at leaſt

Brid. Why, madam, you are not ſo old.

Urſ. Indeed, but I am—old enough to know I ought not to part with one lover 'till I am ſure of another.

Brid. To be ſure, madam, a bird in the hand is worth two in the buſh; but the ſport of hampering the rogues, who are at liberty, is ſo vaſtly pretty.

Urſ. Ay, if we were ſure of catching them at laſt: but, Bridget, Bridget, how often do they eſcape through our fingers and give us the ſlip! Beſides it is for younger laſſes

laſſes than I to go bird-catching.—I cannot throw ſalt on the tail of a ſparrow now.

Brid. O, madam, we ſhall ſee that. Sir John will be here preſently.

Urſ. Bleſs us, Bridget, here he comes Introduce him and leave us. [Exit *Bridget.*

SCENE XII. Same *Apartment* continued.

Enter *Falſtaff.*

Fal. Well, my fair princeſs, ſee thy wand'ring knight.

Urſ. Welcome to London, Sir John; thou art indeed a wanderer.

Fal. A true knight-errant for thy ſake.

Urſ. For my ſake, Sir John?

Fal. Ay, for thine, my Helen. Have I not encounter'd tremendous giants and fiery dragons, in the rebels of Northumberland and Wales? And then for magicians and enchanted caſtles: Owen Glendower and his Welch devils we put to the rout; and many a ſtrong-hold between here and Weſt-Cheſter have I viſited, releaſing fair damſels and diſtreſſed 'ſquires from captivity. I brought two of the latter up to town; I would they were ſafely immur'd in the country again.

Urſ. And all theſe exploits for me, Sir John?

Fal. As I am a true knight, to lay my laurels at my feet.

Urſ. Do you then ſtill love me in ſincerity, Sir John?

Fal. Do I love thee? Am I a ſoldier? Have I courage? Love thee; I will be thy Troilus, and thou ſhalt be my Creſſida.

Urſ. You have long told me ſo, indeed.

Fal. And can I lye? Thou ſhalt be ſole poſſeſſor of my perſon and wealth. Thou ſhalt ſhare in the honours done me at the court of the new king. Thou ſhall—but what ſhalt thou not do? We will be married incontinently.

Urſ. O, Sir John, you know your own power and our ſex's weakneſs: but indeed for decency I cannot ſo ſpeedily conſent. Beſides, Sir John, I am not yet put into poſſeſſion of my eſtate and monies.

Fal. Nay then, as thou ſay'ſt, love, for decency's ſake, we muſt bear with a ſhort delay: but I will no longer be kept out of poſſeſſion than thou art.

Urſ. You ſhall not, Sir John: and, in the mean time, our lawyers ſhall confer on the terms of our marriage.

Fal. I hate lawyers. Let a prieſt ſuffice. Am not I a man of honour?

To do thee leſs than juſtice were a ſin.
Give me thy lips; we'll ſettle all within.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A *Tavern* in *Eaſtcheap.*

Sir *John Falſtaff*, ſitting at a Table. Enter *Bardolph.*

Bar. SIR John, here is the hobbling friar again, that has been ſo often to aſk after you. Shall we ſay you are at home?

Fal Ay, let him in. What can the gouty preciſian want with me? [Enter *Friar.*

Friar. Peace be with you. Sir John, God ſave ye.

Fal. Thank thee good father. What is your reverence's will?

Fri. I think thou doſt not know me, Sir John, It is indeed many years ſince our perſonal intimacy: your way of life and mine ——

Fal. Were ſomething different, father, to be ſure: and tho' I may have ſeen you before, it is ſo long ſince I have been at ſhrift, that I muſt crave your pardon if I have totally forgot ye. And yet your reverence may be my ghoſtly father, for ought I know.

Fri. Fie, fie, Sir John, a man of your age and gravity.

Fal. Hoh! if your buſineſs be to chide me, I ſhut mine ears.

Fri. If you will not admit your wound to be prob'd, how can you expect to be cur'd, Sir John?

Fal. Cur'd! 'ſblood, I took thee for a prieſt, and I find thou art a ſurgeon.

Fri.

Fri. A ſpiritual one, Sir John; and ſuch as your diſorder requires.

Fal. Doſt thou know my caſe then? A ſpiritual ſurgeon ſayſt thou? I am not given over by the ſurgeons bodily yet. Who call in the divine till they have ſent out the doctor?

Fri. I know your caſe well, Sir John. It is perhaps leſs your body than your mind that is infected.

Fal. Nay, like enough. I have indeed been damnably diſpirited ever ſince the king's coronation. A confounded melancholy hangs upon me like a quotidian ague.

Fri. It is that melancholy, and the cauſe of it, Sir John, I would remove.

Fal. And how wouldſt thou remove it? By providing me with a charge of horſe, and reſtoring me to the king's favour. I know no other way.

Fri. By inducing thee to repent, and be reſtor'd to the favour of the King of kings; which thou haſt forfeited by a diſſolute and abandoned life. Doſt thou not think thou art in a ſtate of reprobation?

Fal. Pray, friar, by what authority doſt thou take upon thee to catechiſe me? Doſt thou come out of mere charity, or art thou employ'd by thy ſuperiors?

Fri. Suppoſe the former, Sir John.

Fal. Suppoſe the former, father friar, why then the devil is ſo ſtrong in me, that I ſhould be tempted to throw thee headlong down ſtairs for thy charitable impertinence.

Fri. Thy ill-manners, Sir John, would be inexcuſable, were it not to be ſuppoſed the conſequence of a habitual antipathy to ev'ry thing that is good. But, will not lay claim to greater merit than is my due. am come by order of my Lord-chief juſtice; who is much your friend as to intereſt himſelf in your reformation.

Fal. My Lord-chief-juſtice! that's another matter. I cry thee mercy, reverend father. I find thou'rt not the man I took thee for. Your reverence does me honour; and I profeſs I am much indebted to his lordſhip's kind love and regard to my ſoul's health.

Fri. You'll hear me then, Sir John.

Fal. Yea, heav'n forbid I ſhould not—what I ſaid was meant againſt thoſe officious zealots, who are ſo forward to pry into mens conſciences that will not bear the looking into.

Fri. Sir John, we know your failings; and ſhall not put you to the trouble of auricular confeſſion at preſent.

Fal. There, friar, thou win'ſt my heart. Come ſit thee down. Wilt drink a glaſs of ſack?

Fri. I never do, Sir John.

Fal. I cry thee mercy, then. Here is to your reverence's health; and now, I'll tell thee what,—I do proteſt I ſit me now upon the ſtool of repentance, and have been honeſtly deliberating, ſome time paſt, to change my courſe of life. I am heartily tir'd of it. Indeed, I am, good father.

Fri. I am glad to find thee in ſuch promiſing diſpoſitions, and think thou couldſt not do better than to betake thyſelf, agreeable to his lordſhip's intentions, to ſome monaſtery, where thou wilt be ſecluded from temptations, and have all ſpiritual aſſiſtance to encourage thee to mortify the deſires of the fleſh.

Fal. Hold thee there, good father. Let me underſtand thee. What! would his lordſhip make a monk of me? I muſt there beg his pardon. A monk; and to mortify the fleſh! For heav'ns ſake, good father, conſider what a mortification indeed that muſt be to me, who have ſix times the quantity of any other man. If I muſt be included within the pale of the church, why not make a canon of me (not indeed a minor canon) but a prebendary, or a biſhop, now. Something might be ſaid for either of theſe. But for a monk! I know not any thing I am leſs fit for; unleſs indeed his lordſhip had meant to make a running footman of me.

Fri. Nay, Sir John, his lordſhip will not uſe compulſion in this. He will not ſo far lay a reſtraint on your inclinations.

Fal. O, if I ever find myſelf that way inclin'd; his lordſhip may depend on it I ſhall be as ready as ever to follow my inclinations. But the leſſon of lean and ſallow abſtinence is very long and hard, good father; I am not gotten half way through the firſt chapter yet.

Fri. Some ſteps, however, Sir John, you muſt take, toward a more reputable way of life; and that ſpeedily

too: otherwiſe you will be ſtript of the honours of knighthood; and the king's ſentence of baniſhment will be ſtrictly put into execution againſt you.

Fal. As to the matter of knighthood; once a knight and always a knight, you know. The king may make as many knights as he pleaſes; but he will not ſo eaſily unmake them again. My title will not depend on the king's courteſy, but on that of my followers. I am, notwithſtanding, very deſirous to give his lordſhip ſatisfaction: and do aſſure thee, on the honour of a ſoldier, of the ſincerity of my repentance.

Fri. And yet this may be only a tranſitory penitence, owing to your late diſappointment. What reaſon canſt thou give me to hope this ſtate of mind will continue?

Fal. Why, father, what I am ſhortly going to do is an act, that has confin'd many a man to a ſtate of repentance, which hath continued to the laſt hour of his life.

Fri. This, Sir John, is ſaying ſomething. Pray what are you going to do?

Fal. I have taken a reſolution, father to——What doſt thou think now it is I have reſolv'd upon?

Fri. Some commendable act of penance, no doubt.

Fal. Nay, it may well be call'd ſo, I believe. I am determin'd, good father, to marry.

Fri. Call you that an act of penance, Sir John? Is marriage a ſtate of mortification?

Fal. I wiſh I may not find it ſo.

Fri. Well, Sir John, marriage is a holy ſtate; and in ſome degree I approve your reſolution; but, in the eſtimation of the church, it is alſo an holy act, and ought not to be enter'd into unadviſedly. Your repentance ſhould preceed your receiving the benefit of that ſacrament.

Fal. O, doubt not but I ſhall repent me ſufficiently afterwards.

Fri. Ah! Sir John, Sir John, I fear me you are no true penitent: but, however, it may be lawful to ſalve what cannot be effectually cured. I did not expect to make a convert at the firſt interview. If thou takeſt any meaſures that tend tow'rd reformation, thou ſhalt have my

my prayers and beſt aſſiſtance therein. Another time I will hold farther converſation with thee.

Fal. In the mean time, good father, let me ſtand fair in your report to my Lord-chief-juſtice and his majeſty.

Fri. Thou ſhalt ſtand fairer than I fear thou deſerveſt. Farewel. [Exit *Friar.*

SCENE II. *Tavern* continued.

Falſtaff, ſolus.

Fare thee well, good father friar. What an hypocritical puritan! Would not drink ſack! Not with the ungodly, I ſuppoſe. But I am damnably miſtaken, if he be not indebted for that roſy countenance and the gout, to the penetrating qualities of old ſherris. Bardolph! get ready to attend me forth. I'll tow'rd St. Paul's. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. An Apartment at *Court*.

Enter *King*, Lord *Scroop*, and others.

King. The French ambaſſadors! they ſhall have audience.
But firſt we ſhall diſpatch the ſaucy legate.

Lord. My liege, he comes; and with my lords the biſhops.

SCENE IV. *Apartment* continued.

Enter Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, the Pope's Legate, and other Biſhops.

Arch. Heav'n ſhow'r its choiceſt bleſſings on your majeſty.
May conqueſt, honour, peace, and length of days,
Attend your glorious reign. My liege, the nuncio.

King. Well, my lord cardinal, your reverence
Hath freſh diſpatches from the court of Rome:
What is their tenour?

Leg. Such as well becomes
The court of Rome, his holineſs our maſter,
The delegate of heav'n, and firſt in power
Of all the kings and princes in the world;

Him at whoſe feet obedient monarchs bow,
As unto God's vice-gerent here on earth.
In ſubſtance this—your majeſty muſt yield—
Scroop. Muſt! lordly prieſt! Where didſt thou learn thy manners?
That word will work. [*Aſide.*
Leg. Lord, where didſt thou? I ſpoke unto the king.
King. Lord Scroop your love and zeal make you too bold.
Scroop. Your highneſs pardon me; but you're too good
To grant an audience to th' ill-manner'd prieſt,
Who dares to caſt ſuch inſult upon majeſty.
Muſt yield, my liege!
King. Proceed, lord cardinal.
Leg. In few, king Henry, nothing will his holineſs
Abate of thoſe pretenſions he hath founded,
Reſpecting the diſpoſal of church giſts,
And the proviſions made by th' holy ſee
For any prieſt or biſhop in the realm:
By me enjoining, hence, the king of England
To put them peaceably in full poſſeſſion
Of all the temporalities, that now,
Or heretofore, were known to them belonging.
King. And all this muſt be done.
Scroop. Ay muſt, my liege.
King. Enough.—Lord cardinal, we underſtand ye.—
And as we labour here in ſome neceſſity——
Leg. Yet more: his holineſs requires that law
Should be repeal'd, which now declares it treaſon
To levy contributions on the clergy,
For ſpiritual uſe, without conſent of parliament.
King. 'Tis well; thus much for us, and now for you.
Your excellence muſt take that loyal oath
Your predeceſſor took in Richard's time;—
Doſt thou remember't, uncle Exeter?
Exet. It is, my liege, that he ſhall neither act,
Permit, or cauſe whatever to be acted,
That's detrimental to the king's prerogative,
Or laws o' th' kingdom: that he'd execute
No bulls or mandates hurtful to your perſon,
The rights o' th' crown, and legal conſtitution:

And more particularly never ſend
Our jewels, plate, and monies hence abroad,
Without a licenſe from the king and council.
King. This, my lord cardinal, for you: the reſt
We'll ſend by ſpecial envoy to the pope
Leg. Impoſe an oath on me! miſtaken prince!
I am a ſervant to the King of heav'n;
And owe allegiance unto none but him,
And to his repreſentative at Rome.
King. See that thou take this oath in three days time,
Or henceforth let me ſee thy face no more;
But leave our kingdom as you prize your life.
Nay, make me no reply. I'll hear no more.
[Exit *King* and *Lords*.

SCENE V. Continued.

Manent Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, Legate, and other Biſhops.

Arch. Lord cardinal, you are too bold and peremptory.
Did not I tell you this was not your way;
That Henry was not to be intimidated?
Leg. You did. I have indeed o'erſhot the mark;
I ſee the error now. But ſay, my lord,
What's to be done?
Arch. For Rome, I fear not much: for, as for us,
Of England's clergy, we can aid you little.
We ſhall have much to do to ſave ourſelves.
Nay, to do this, I ſee no other means
Than that of giving ſuch a mighty ſum,
As may ſuffice the preſent wants o' th' court.
This may perhaps defer the evil day,
In which the laity will ſtrip the church.
But let's my lords to Lambeth; there are met
Our other rev'rend brethren, the lords biſhops;
There we'll commune together on our grievances.
[Exeunt all but the *Legate*.

SCENE VI. Continued.

Legate, ſolus.

And is it thus? I then will take this oath.
From hence I will not, till this upſtart king

Shall ſtoop, and kiſs the rod of my correction.
No, I will ſtay and ſow the ſeeds of diſcord,
'Till, like the fabled dragon's teeth of old,
They ſhoot up into rebels arm'd againſt him.
Th' impriſon'd Mortimer, the legal heir's
A pious friend to Rome. He ſhall be king;
Or I will ſpread ſo wide the ſcene of blood,
That England ſhall be one continued ſlaughter-houſe.
The French deſpiſe the haughty ſtripling's claims,
And doubtleſs will aſſiſt in this good work.
I'll get a mandate ſent expreſs from Rome,
That ſhall abſolve his ſubjects of allegiance.
Harry ſit faſt, or quickly thou ſhalt know,
How dang'rous 'tis to make the church thy foe.

SCENE VII. A *Street.*

Enter Juſtice *Shallow* and Maſter *Slender.*

Shal. Take me—take me this letter, I ſay, to Sir John Falſtaff.—That is his ſuttling-houſe. I will maul his cloak-bag of chitterlings with my rapier, as I may.

Slen. And will you fight him, couſin? Well, hang me if I carry the challenge. I never could abide the thoughts of cold iron. Even a key put down my back for a bloody noſe, ugh—ugh—ugh, would always ſet me a ſhuddering.

Shal. Don't tell me—if the law will not get me my money, I'll be reveng'd of him. The tun-bellied knave ſhall not make ſuch a fool of me. I will have his blood or my money.

Slen. His blood! O lud! O lud! Why, couſin Shallow, you are enough to——

Shal. Carry me this letter, I ſay, to Sir John Falſtaff. What is it to you? If I am kill'd, you are my heir, and come in for my land and beaves. So do as I bid you.

Slen. Ecod, that's true. I did not think of that: if my couſin's kill'd, I come in for his eſtate. *(Aſide)* Ay, ay, give it me, I'll carry him the challenge. Hey! here he comes, with his bottle-nos'd man, that pick'd my pocket.

Shal. Ay, he would paſs without ſeeing us.

SCENE

SCENE VIII. *Street* continued.

Enter *Falſtaff* and *Bardolph*.

Shal. Sir John! Sir John Falſtaff!

Bar. Sir John, juſtice Shallow calls ye.

Fal. What would the blade of ſpear-mint have with me? I have done with him.

Shal. But I have not yet done with you, Sir John! I would firſt have my thouſand pound of you again.

Fal. You would, maſter Shallow! like enough! You muſt take me then in the humour. I am at preſent ill-diſpos'd to your ſuit.

Shal. Tut, Sir John. I have ſaid I will not tamely put up this wrong. If I do, I ſhall be flouted and gib'd to death: I ſhall be purſued by the mockery of a whole hundred.

Fal. Not unlikely. But, believe me, the more you buſtle in this buſineſs, the more you will expoſe yourſelf. The more you ſtir——you know the proverb, maſter Shallow, it is a little homely, ſo let that paſs. Yet, let me adviſe thee; reſt content.

Shal. Content! I am not content. I cannot be content. Nay, I will not be content. Give me back the money, or I will have ſatisfaction of thee.

Fal. Satisfaction, ſayſt thou? Why thou wilt not dare me to the combat.

Shal. Such provocation would make a coward fight, Sir John.

Fal. If it make thee fight, I'll be ſworn it would: for I have ſeen thee tremble at the ſhaking of a wheat-ear.

Shal. To be bamboozled! cheated! laught at! I will not put it up. By heav'ns, I will not put it up.

Fal. Well ſaid, maſter Shallow. Now I ſee there's mettle in thee. But ſurely thou wouldſt not be the firſt to break the peace? thou, whoſe office it is to puniſh the breach of it.

Shal. Sir John, there are times and ſeaſons for all things. If you will neither give me my money nor gentleman's ſatisfaction, I will have thee toſs'd in a blanket for a poltroon as thou art.

Fal. They muſt be ſtout carls, maſter Shallow, that toſs me in a blanket.

Shal. Well, well, we ſhall ſee, I'll parley with you no longer. Couſin Slender, don't ſtand ſhill I, ſhall I, but give him the note.

Sen. Ay, ay, if coz is kill'd, I ſhall have his eſtate; and ſo there's the challenge.

[Exeunt *Shallow* and *Slender.*

SCENE IX. Continued.

Falſtaff and *Bardolph.*

Fal. A challenge!——By the Lord, and it is a challenge. I am call'd upon here to meet him at ſingle rapier. Hoo! what a turluru! In the name of common-ſenſe is the fool turn'd madman? What means the ſimple tony by this? To get his money again? Does he think by running me thro' the pericardium to become my heir at law? The fearful ſtag is at bay, and become deſperate. But let me ſee—what's to be done here? I am in perſon too much of a knight to engage with ſo little a 'ſquire.—I have it.—Bardolph, I being your maſter and a knight, thou art by the laws of chivalry no leſs than a 'ſquire Now, as I take it, this quarrel is properly thine: thou muſt meet juſtice Shallow at ſingle rapier.

Bar. I, Sir John. He has no quarrel againſt me. The challenge is given to your honour.

Fal. True, but I tell thee my honour diſdains to encounter a pitiful 'ſquire: thou muſt take my ſword and fight him.

Bar. I ſhall only diſgrace your arms, Sir John.

Fal. Go to, you will do well. He knows nothing of the ſword; and ſhould he challenge thee at piſtols, put a charge into each barrel, and preſent thy noſe at him: he will never ſtand thy fire.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, I muſt be excus'd. I never could fight in my life, unleſs there was ſomething to be got by it; for a booty on the highway, or ſo.

Fal. Why 'tis for a thouſand pound, you rogue.

Bar. And where's the money?

Fal. At my caſhier's.

Bar. Well then, Sir John, why ſhould we fight for it?

Fal.

Fal. Bardolph, thou art a coward; but no matter. I have a thought: I will meet him myſelf. See that my buckler be well lin'd that I fought with at Shrewſbury. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE X. An Apartment.

Enter Lord *Scroop* and the Earl of *Cambridge*.

Scroop. Now comes the ſeaſon of commotion on.
The French ambaſſadors have had their audience,
And carry back defiance to their maſter.
The nettled Harry arms, mean time, for France;
Inviting all the gallant youths of Britain,
To join his raſhneſs in this expedition.
Cam. We muſt with him too.
Scroop. Curſe on his favour: yes; he means, forſooth,
To do us honour.
Cam. Had we ſtaid at home,
We might, perhaps, have ſeiz'd ſome fair occaſion
To ſtrike the crown off his uſurping head,
And place it on the rightful brows of Mortimer.
The legate is already our ſtaunch friend,
And France will aid our plot t' enſure ſucceſs:
Yet ſtill we cannot make our party ſtrong.
While Harry keeps that eagle eye upon us,
At ev'ry ſtep we ſtumble on ſuſpicion.
Scroop. Why, if his eye offend thee, pluck it out.
Cam. Would he were out o' th' way.
Scroop. Canſt thou not ſend him?
No time more opportune could have been wiſh'd,
Than when, full fledg'd and on the wing for France,
His troops embark'd, and all intent on conqueſt,
He means to follow. Might he not be ſent
A longer journey than from hence to Normandy?
Cam. Whither?
Scroop. To heav'n.
Cam. Would he, indeed, were there.
Scroop. Couldſt thou not ſtrike a blow? a home one.
Cam. Ha!
Scroop. Could not thy poniard ſteal into his heart?
Cam. 'Twere better guided by ſome other hand.
In open fight I could encounter lions;
But bear no ſteady point i' th' trade of murther.

Scroop. In open fight! and wouldſt thou covet hazard?
Who ſeeks thro' danger to obtain the end,
That may be reach'd without, may boaſt an heart;
But gives ſtrong proofs o' th' weakneſs of his head.
Cam. Scroop, I object not unto Harry's death;
Nor to the ſafeſt means to cut him off:
I only would not be his executioner.
Who means to profit by the murd'rers work,
Should never bear the odium of his guilt.
Scroop. I did not mean you e're ſhould profit by't.
But fear makes blockheads cunning. [*Aſide.*
Cambridge, methinks thou ſhould be firſt to ſtrike?
Whoſe is the cauſe, but Mortimer's and thine?
Cam. And yet I will not be myſelf th' aſſaſſin:
It would be both impolitick and dangerous:
I wonder, Scroop, thy prudence ſees it not.
Villains enow there are for ſuch employ:
Had we not better hire ſome ruffian's poniard;
One whoſe miſcarriage might not even reach us;
And yet, ſucceeding, on whoſe worthleſs head
The vengeance of the public hate might fall;
We ſeeming but the while to take th' advantage
Of ſuch an accident to raiſe up Mortimer.
Scroop. Curſe on't. Th' affair is thine: there's not a villain
Money will bribe but will his int'reſt find
As much in his betraying us.
Cam. I would not truſt to intereſt alone:
But a deep grounded hate and fix'd reſentment
Againſt th' uſurper's perſon may do much.
Scroop. Who bears him ſuch good-will?
Cam. The baniſh'd Falſtaff;
His late moſt hopeful tutor and companion;
A finiſh'd villain!
Scroop. Yes, too much a villain.
Damn him he has not honeſty enough.
Cam. If but his hatred's amply keen 'twill do:
And, if I'm well inform'd, you now will find him
For miſchief ripe, and thirſty for revenge.
Scroop. Harry hath treated him, indeed, but roughly;
But all ſuch daſtard wretches can forgive.

Beſides

Beſides, they ſay he's but a bluſt'ring coward,
That wears his dagger only in his mouth.

Cam. Yes, he can ſtab. This, Scroop, is coward's work.
He hates young Harry, and with grounded reaſon;
I cannot think, but comes this taſk a-foot,
He's a moſt proper villain.

Scroop. I will ſound him;
And as I find him fitting for our purpoſe,
Will ſeek to bind him faſt unto our ſervice.
Mean time, neglect not thou Sir Thomas Grey,
Who wiſhes well to thee and to our cauſe.

Cam. I will not.

Scroop. Neither is it leſs expedient
To teach thy ſword leſs honour and more ſafety.
Say Harry falls, three brothers yet remain;
And ere thyſelf, or Mortimer, ſucceed
The ſons of Bolingbroke muſt freely bleed.

[*Exeunt* ſeverally.

SCENE XI. A *Field.* Enter *Falſtaff.*

Aha—Aha—What a vile miſt there is abroad this evening! I cannot ſee a ſword's length before me. This muſt be the ſpot. But where is our adverſary? I would not have him, methinks, loſt in the fog. Maſter Shallow! Maſter Shallow!

SCENE XII.

Enter *Shallow*, ſtript for the Combat.

Shal. Ay, ay, Sir John, here am I.

Fal. Saints and good angels guard us! what is this?

Shal. Come, Sir John, draw, draw.

Fal. It calls me by my name too! *Jeſu Maria!* It is no *deceptio viſûs*. In the name of heav'n and earth, what art thou? Ouphe, fairy, ghoſt, hobgoblin, or demon? *Exorciſo te.—Pater noſter*——

Shal. Come, Sir John, don't think to put me from my purpoſe, you know me very well. You know juſtice Shallow to his coſt.

Fal. How! can this thing be Robert Shallow of Glouceſterſhire, eſq; juſtice of the peace, and of the quorum?

quorum? I took it for ſome ſtroling ghoſt eſcap'd out of purgatory, by all that's terrible.

Shal. Sir John, this mockery ſhall not ſuffice you.

Fal. Nay, it is true, as I am a ſinner.

Shal. Will you fight me, Sir John, or will you not?

Fal. Fight thee! when thou ſeeſt the princely eagle deſcend to encounter with the tomtit. What! ſhall the lofty elephant wield his proboſcis againſt a mite? Shall Sir John Falſtaff draw his martial ſword againſt ſuch a pigwidgeon as thou?

Shal. What then did you come here for, Sir John? If you would not be treated as a coward, lay down your target, and draw.

Fal. Lay down my target, ſay'ſt thou? Who would be fool then? Look ye, maſter Shallow (ſince ſhallow thou wilt be) if I fight, it muſt be on equal terms. It is but equitable that my body ſhould be ſecur'd, when I engage with an unſubſtantial form; a thing that has none. Doſt thou think me ſuch a gooſe-cap as to lay open this fair round belly to the point of thy rapier, when thou preſenteſt not a mark for me. It were as good as pricking at a lottery, ten thouſand blanks to a prize, to make a thruſt at thee. It were indeed more than a miracle to hit what, rhetorically ſpeaking, is impalpable. But come, if thou muſt fight with me, thou ſhalt not ſay I deal unfairly by thee. To draw my ſword would be needleſs: for hit thee I never ſhall. —That's flat. Therefore Toledo reſt thou in thy ſcabbard. This is my ward. *(Stands on his defence with his target.)* Carry thy point as thou wilt: if thou canſt not come into me before thou art weary, the money is mine; if thou doſt, and woundeſt me, I will then—keep it to pay the ſurgeon. So, come on.

Shal. Sir John, you are a cowardly knave, and I will kill you if I can. *(They fight. Mr. Shallow thruſts at Sir John, who receives his point always on his target.*

Fal Well ſaid, maſter Shallow. — Bravo! — To't again.—Sa—Sa. *(Shallow breaks his ſword, and Falſtaff cloſes with him, and ſeizes him by the collar; on which Shallow falls down on his knees, and Falſtaff claps the target on his head.)*

Ha!

Ha! have I nabb'd you? you ſhould have appointed ſticklers, Mr. Shallow. What if I ſhould cut thy throat now. *(Taking off the target.*

Shal. Sir John, my life is in your hands: but you know you have wrong'd me.

Fal. Well then, thy wrongs be forgotten; and, on that condition, I give thee back thy forfeited life.

Shal. And I hope alſo you won't bear malice, Sir John, againſt mé for the future.

Fal. By the Lord, not I. I do admire thy magnanimity and valour. Why, thou art the very mirror of proweſs, and pink of 'ſquire errantry. John of Gaunt was a fool to thee. Were I a king, thou ſhouldſt, for this day's work, be made a knight with all the honours of chivalry. Nay, by our lady, I will take majeſty upon me, and knight thee myſelf. Riſe up Sir Robert Shallow, knight of the moſt horrible order of combatants and murderers of the fifth button. And now, Sir Robert, if thou doſt not think the title I've beſtow'd on thee worth the thouſand pounds I owe thee; I give thee my word, that, when ſack is cheap, and I have money to ſpare, I will think of thee; and ſo farewell, Sir Robert Shallow, knight.

[Exit *Falſtaff.*

SCENE XIII.

Shallow, ſolus.

The devil ſure is in fee with this roiſting bell-ſwagger. There is no good to be made of him any way. I find I muſt perforce ſit me down contented, and bear my loſs as I may. I hope nevertheleſs to ſee the raſcal come to the gallows yet.

O were I ſure that once would come to paſs;
That he might pay for making me an aſs!

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

An *Apartment.*

Enter Friar *Paul*, and *Eleanor Poins.*

Fri. DAughter, 'twas indiſcreet ſo long to hide
This rude behaviour of lord Scroop from me.
Ele. Alas, good father, 'twas for that I fear'd
He might increaſe the anger of the king.
Nor ſhould I now have told your rev'rence ought,
But that I fear he means this very night
To do a violence, I dread to think of.
Fri. Raſh man! impoſſible, he cannot mean it.
And yet I know not why, from time to time,
He hath put off the hour of your retreat.
Yet fear thou nought, myſelf will be your guardian
Until to-morrow, when thou ſhalt go hence,
And be no longer ſubject to his power.
By holy Paul, the king is much deceiv'd;
He never ſo would trifle with my character,
As it ſhould ſeem, by this ſame lord, he doth.
But ſee he comes.—I and our brother Lawrence,
Who waits without, will take care to be near thee.
[Exit *Friar*

SCENE II. *Apartment* continued.

Enter Lord *Scroop.*

Scroop. Well, my hard-hearted fair, what cruel fit
Thoſe icy looks would freeze me to the ſoul,
Did I not flatter me the glowing fires,
That warm my breaſt, will melt thee ſoon to love?
Why ſilent, love? and why this killing coldneſs?
Haſt thou no ſympathy, my gentle Nell?
Dead to th' embraces of a lover's arm,
You catch no ſpark of his conſuming flame.
Ele. My lord, I beg you'd ceaſe this perſecution.
Have I not oft aſſur'd thee, not the world
Should bribe my ſoul to ſuch avow'd pollution?
Scroop. Away with all this artifice. I tell you,
King Harry ſets no value on your conſtancy.
Your prince, fair lady,'s wonderfully chang'd:

Nor is he more the gentle thing he was,
When he would ſkip about a harlot's chamber,
And act the page of every ambling nymph,
That pleas'd to ſend him on her goſſip's errand.
Ele. I never knew him, lord, ſo very gentle,
That very tame, unmanly thing you ſpeak of:
But this I dare be confident to hope,
Howe'er his heart be chang'd reſpecting me,
He will do juſtice to his lowlieſt ſubject;
Nor am I yet ſo deſtitute of means,
But my complaints may reach the royal ear.
Scroop. And doſt thou brave me then, minx paramount?
Know that I govern Harry as a child;
Who thinks nor acts but as I tune his will.
Renounce thy ſcruples, therefore, at my pleaſure;
Or he ſhall give thee up to want and beggary.
Thou ſhalt not have withal to buy thee bread,
But earn it at the price of ſhame and wantonneſs.
Ele. Indeed, my lord, indeed——
Scroop. Nay, thou doſt weep.
Come on—I will not chide thee—thou'lt be kind.
I come to take of thee a long farewell.
The king already's on his way for France.
I've but a few ſhort moments to be bleſt;
And then muſt ſpeed me after.—To your chamber
Come, my fair Nell, or let me gently force thee.
Ele. Forbear, my lord, I pray, my lord, forbear;
Nay then I call for help.—What, help! ho! help!

SCENE III. *Apartment* continued.

Enter Friars *Paul* and *Lawrence*.

Friar P. Hold, hold, my lord, this rudeneſs is too much.
I am the guardian of this lady's perſon;
A charge deliver'd by the king himſelf;
And will not bear to ſee her thus inſulted.
Scroop. Thou buſy prieſt, be ſtraitway gone and leave us;
Or I will perſecute thee to thy ruin.
Art thou th' old paramour of this ſame harlot?
Or play'ſt thou but the advocate of others,

Whoſe

Whoſe luſtful blood boils fiercer than thine own?
If ſo, begone, and know thine office better.
There is my purſe—go wait, I ſay, without.
Fri. P. My lord, this mean abuſe but ill becomes you.
But know, I will not go. My character
And innocence protect me: nor ſhall you
Stay, to repeat your inſults on this fair one.
Scroop. Who ſhall prevent me?
[*Offers to draw, but is hinder'd by friar Lawrence, who, ſtanding behind, ſeizes his ſword.*
Hell and vengeance! where—
Where are my ſervants?
Fri. P. I, my lord, diſmiſs'd them.
Scroop. Prieſts, you ſhall hear of this: ſhall loudly hear of it.
Give me my ſword.
Fri. L. Not while you're thus impatient.
Fri. P. No; keep it. I will anſwer't to the king.
Scroop. Thou anſwer't to the king! thou paltry friar
Fri. P. Yea, by my life and loyalty, I will:
Therefore my lord 'twere better you retire.
Scroop. I will, and to thy ruin, baudy prieſt.
Thou, harlot, art provided for, I ſee,
With theſe two brawny friars.—Thou ſhalt rue it.
[Exit *Scroop.*

SCENE IV. *Apartment* continued.

Ele. Alas, good father, what is't you have done?
I tremble for the event. This pow'rful lord
Is all in all in royal Henry's favour.
Fri. P. Yet fear thou naught: tho' he were more than all,
I have that in my hand *(ſhewing a letter)* ſhall make this lord
Yet leſs than nothing. He's an arrant traitor.
Juſt now a meſſenger enquir'd without
For the lord Scroop; whoſe ſervants all diſmiſs'd,
The unſuſpicious fellow gave me this,
Beſeeching its delivery on th' inſtant.
But, as I thought it might relate to thee,
Unſeen I broke it open; when, good heav'n!
I found

I found in't the ſuggeſtions of a traitor,
Plotting againſt our monarch's ſacred life.
Ele. Againſt his life! From whence? O who hath ſent it?
Fly, fly, this inſtant fly, and tell the danger.
Fri. P. I'll ſend immediate poſt unto the king.
Fri. L. But will not, brother, this raſh lord return,
And wreak revenge on us, for what is paſt?
Fri. P. He hath not here a moment's time of leiſure:
I learn his majeſty e'en now expects him
Down at Southampton. Hence, without delay,
He muſt to horſe. Yet, to avoid miſhap,
Go, brother Lawrence, and requeſt a guard.
Which done, procure a meſſenger, with ſpeed
To bear my letters to his majeſty.
Daughter, in peace retire; mean while I'll write,
And bring his lordſhip's honeſt deeds to light.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. At *Southampton.* An *Apartment.*
Enter *Cambridge* and *Falſtaff.*

Fal. You know not perhaps, my lord, that I am lately married; and if this plotting buſineſs ſhould turn out a hanging matter, as in all likelihood it will, what will become of my wife? She will never get ſuch another huſband.
Cam. (Aſide.) Curſe on this boggling villain. Would we ne'er
Had truſted him: but now there is no remedy.
Fal. And yet, upon ſecond thoughts, if I get into one nooſe I ſhall ſlip my collar out of the other; and ſo it may be in the end, no great matter.
Cam. What heſitation, now? to noble minds
How pleaſant is the proſpect of revenge!
Think Harry Monmouth treads thee under foot.
Fal. Hal hath indeed us'd me but ſcurvily. But here's the point, my lord. I have moſt readily, on your perſuaſion, agreed to turn traitor, have enter'd into all your meaſures, and am come hither to Southampton, where my part of the matter is to be brought to concluſion. You are to get me introduc'd to the king, and, in revenge for his mal-treatment of me, and to pave the way for Mortimer to the throne, I am to introduce

troduce a dagger between the ſhort ribs of majeſty, and ſend his grace to heav'n.

Cam. Well, and why this vain recapitulation?
Have we not anſwer'd your objections yet?
Falſtaff, I took thee for an honeſt villain,
That laugh'd at the impertinence of conſcience.
If thou haſt ſcruples, my lord cardinal
Will baniſh them, and give thee abſolution.

Fal. My lord, I am no puritan. I am no bigot to the church. I would not give a fig for a pocket-full of my lord cardinal's abſolutions: for I am, I confeſs, ſo much of a heretick, that I think, if a man cannot in his own concience acquit himſelf, all the prieſts in Chriſtendom cannot do it. Now, my lord, I ſhould blame myſelf highly if I ſhould run the riſque of being damn'd for—

Cam. Henry's a tyrant; Mortimer is heir;
To free your country, and to right th' oppreſs'd,
Will evermore be deem'd heroick virtue.

Fal. I know, my lord, by the maxims of the church a man will be ſooner anathematiz'd for killing a king whom nobody wants out of the way, than a king who ſtands unluckily in the grip of ſo many loyal princes. I do not pretend to enter into the validity of Harry's title; but, I know it is but the church's calling him a tyrant, and abſolving his ſubjects of their allegiance, and all will go well. Give a dog an ill name, and hang him, my lord—

Cam. Ha! Sirrah, villain, doſt thou mammer then?
I'll ſtab thee. By this light thou ſhalt not live, to—

Fal. Hold, hold, my lord, what, what, cannot you take a jeſt.

Cam. A jeſt, thou villain! is our buſineſs jeſting?
Look to't—ſee you perform your promiſe roundly,
Or woe upon your life—winch e'er ſo little,
The hand is ready that ſhall rip thee up;
And tear thy coward conſcience from thy heart.

Fal. 'Sblood, my lord, I have no conſcience. But as I ſhould have told you, wouldſt thou have heard me that a man would not willingly run the riſque of being damn'd for nothing. You have, you know, made me large promiſes. You tell me I ſhall be made a duke and ſhall have my ſhare in the diviſion of the promiſed land, when Mortimer is king. Not that I doubt

your lordſhip's honour, but conſpirators are ſo liable to accidents; and, as I do not expect my reward in the next world, it is but prudent to ſecure it in this. Doubt not of my being true to your cauſe, but give me ſome earneſt of my future recompenſe.

Cam. What will content thee? money thou haſt had.
What wouldſt thou more that we can ſafely give?
We'll put our lives no farther in your power,
Tho' your's depends on our ſecurity.

Fal. Well, well, my lord, I muſt then be content to truſt to the ſucceſs of our enterprize, and leave it to your honour to proportion my reward to my ſervices.

Cam. In that be ſure thou ſhalt be ſatisfied.
Mean time, go ſteel thy heart and whet thy poniard:
That when the criſis comes thou may'ſt be ready,
With hand and heart to prove thyſelf our friend.

[Exit *Cambridge*.

SCENE VI. *Apartment* continued.

Falſtaff, ſolus.

I ſhall conſider on it—Stab me, quoth he! he is by much too cholerick for a traitor. But he will ſay he is true, being engag'd in the behalf of the legal heir.—That will be ſeen in the end; for thoſe are ever the traitors, who come to the block or the gallows.—If Harry did not deſerve to be damn'd for his ingratitude, it were as good a deed as to drink to turn true-man and impeach theſe conſpirators. And yet there may be danger in that too. I muſt bethink me. But, who comes here? Oh, my lady wife! who has follow'd me here down to Hampton, to be introduc'd to the king, before he ſets out for France. Should Harry take the other journey now, I ſhall be fairly rid of her importunities.

SCENE VII. *Apartment* continued.

Enter Lady *Falſtaff*.

L. F. Well, Sir John, and now you have brought me thus far; when ſhall I be introduced to his majeſty?

Fal. I brought thee! my fair queen of Sheba! it was love that brought thee hither; thy love for the king, for ſe pretty ſweet face thou hadſt never ſeen. In troth I'll be jealous of thee, lady ſpouſe.

L. F. You

L. F. You ſhould have ſaid curioſity, Sir John.

Fal. O, it is the ſame, in effect; love or curioſity will carry a woman without tiring to the world's end.

L. F. Ay, my leman, but it is not the ſame thing, for all that

Fal. Well, I will not diſpute with thee about words. Thou ſhalt talk thy own way, if thou wilt act mine.

L. F. Why, Sir John, I'm ſure my talk cannot offend. I am no rattle.

Fal. A cherry-clack in a high wind: that's all.

L. F. Go, go, Sir John, you are curſt to day. I will leave ye: but mind I inſiſt on our ſeeing his majeſty, before he goes to France: and they tell me the troops are almoſt all embark'd.

Fal. Where goeſt thou, my pigſneye?

L. F. To my maids, to be ſure.

[Exit Lady *Falſtaff.*

Fal. Ay, where thou mayſt call names like a parrot, and chatter like a magpie. I will to my brother traitors, and ſee how miſchief goes forward in the brewing.

[Exit Sir *John.*

SCENE VIII. The *King*'s *Apartments.*

Enter King *Henry* and the Duke of *Exeter.*

King. Theſe letters, ſent in haſte from father Paul,
Are ſtrange of tenour, and of dread import;
No leſs than of a treaſonable deſign,
Hatching againſt our perſon and our throne.

Exe. Good heav'ns preſerve your majeſty! by whom?

King. I ſay not that; for God forbid the truth
Should not belye this honeſt friar's ſuſpicions:
For here he tells me that my ſeeming friend,
The man I've worn the neareſt to my heart,
Is falſe as hell, and ſeeks my crown and life.

Exe. Means he the earl of Cambridge?

King. Why, good uncle?
Is he the only one I have diſtinguiſh'd?

Exe. No, my good liege, but that I've lately heard
Of his moſt frequent viſits to the legate;
Who bears, I'm ſure, your highneſs no good will,
Since laſt you taught him who was England's maſter.
Lord Cambridge has beſides a ſtrange deportment;

I cannot

I cannot tell—but 'tis a man I like not.

King. And yet you never hinted this before.

Exe. Never, my liege; for heav'n forbid that ought
Of my looſe fancy and mere wild conjecture
Should injure any man in your eſteem:
I lightly hold my ſkill in phyſiognomy.

King. If ſuch be your remarks, I not, good uncle.
But give me too your thoughts of baron Scroop.

Exe. My liege, I hold him for an honeſt man,
Diſcreet beyond his years, faithful and true,
And one that has your highneſs' good at heart.

King. Nay there you're out; or elſe the writer lies.
He tells me here lord Scroop's the very devil;
And now is plotting with the earl of Cambridge
To take away my life; and ſet the crown
Upon the head of Mortimer.

Exe. Is't poſſible!
How comes the friar by this information?

King. It ſeems he hath a letter intercepted,
Sent by the earl of Cambridge to lord Scroop,
Written in myſtick characters, the which
His rev'rence had the cunning to decypher,
And is himſelf in perſon on the way,
To bring the letter, and explain its meaning.

Exe. The friar was ever held a godly man,
A learned and acute decypherer.
But the lord Scroop—well, ſo if it ſhould prove,
I ne'er will judge again by fair appearances.
Will not your majeſty arreſt them ſtrait,
Upon ſuſpicion? 'twere, my liege, but prudent;
Who knows how ripe their dev'liſh plot may be?

King. Uncle, forewarn'd forearm'd. In very ſhort,
Th' informant will be here: let's wait 'till then.
If it no more ſhould prove than vain ſuſpicion,
I would not caſt upon them ſuch reproach;
Nor ſoil their friendſhip with the doubts of treaſon.

Exe. Yet, the mean time, you will not ſure give audience!

King. Why not, good uncle, yes, I've promis'd Cambridge
To grant a private audience to old Falſtaff.
He hath, I'm told, begun a reformation,
He ſhall not lack our countenance therein.

Exe.

Exe. Audience to Sir John Falſtaff! private too!
My liege, there may be danger in the conference.
King. Uncle, there may: and if I eat or drink,
Walk, ſit, or ſtand, there may be danger too:
There's not the ſimpleſt action of our lives
But is attended with its ſhare of danger.
I am not raſh; but yet I hold it baſe,
In fear of death, to live a ſlave to life.
No, uncle, though perchance I die to night,
Let me go through the buſineſs of to day:
Death cannot reach us in a happier hour
Than that in which it finds us in our duty.
Fear not, my uncle, Providence will ſhield us;
A guardian angel hovers round your king;
And will protect him from the ruffian's poniard.
And for the reſt—be it your care, good uncle,
To keep an eye on theſe ſuſpected lords.
With ſpeed and ſilence let our guards be doubled;
And be my uncle York and brothers near us.
Exe. My liege, I will. But yet I fear this Falſtaff
Hath your grace heard of other reformation
Than what the earl of Cambridge hath ſuggeſted?
King. I have, good uncle, ev'n from father Paul;
Who ſaid the knight was nigh to be well married,
Belike he needs our countenance herein.
If that our ſmiles will make our ſubjects good,
We'll not deny them to the meaneſt vaſſal.
Where are our brothers, and our uncle York? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX. *An Apartment.*

Enter Lord *Scroop* and *Cambridge.*

Scroop. Sir John hath now his leſſon. Speed him forth.
When Harry ſalls, to horſe, and ſpur away,
With a choice party of light troops, to Mortimer,
Conduct him hither with the utmoſt ſpeed:
His guards, ſurpriz'd, will ſtand not in reſiſtance.
Mean time, we'll ſeize the uncles and the brothers,
As chief abettors of king Harry's murther.
Nay, Falſtaff ſhall declare they ſet him on,
Or, by yon heav'n, we'll hang him Haman's height.
What troops are there embark'd?

Cam.

Cam. Ev'n all but thoſe o'er which we have command;
And of Sir Thomas Grey, our loyal friend.
Scroop. That's well contriv'd. I left the legate buſy,
In raiſing monies, and fomenting treaſon.
In ten days time half London will be ripe
To ſpurn at ſacrilegious Hal, and join us.
But here's Sir Thomas Grey.

SCENE X. *Same Apartment continued.*

Enter Sir *Thomas Grey.*

Sir T. G. How now, my lords, why ſtay you loit'ring here?
Is it not time Sir John ſhould be at court?
Scroop. It is yet time enough; but th' hour moves ſlow,
When expectation ſits upon the watch.
Cam. Sir Thomas, your impatience binds you to us,
As one whoſe heart is bent on our ſucceſs.
Sir Tho. It is: but ſure the time is drawing near;
The king has bidden Falſtaff's free admittance;
But I have orders from the Duke of Exeter
To double all the guards. What can that mean?
I hope there's no ſuſpicion got abroad,
Should Falſtaff now impeach us, we are loſt.
Cam. Ay, that indeed would be a fatal ſtroke:
And, to ſay truth, I almoſt tremble for't.
Scroop. Cambridge, thou'rt ever wav'ring as the wind;
One moment raſhly braving needleſs danger;
The next, ſuſpicion making thee a coward.
Impeach us! let him, we will face him down;
Say whate'er he ſays, ſwear all is falſhood:
Shall he gain credit 'gainſt ſuch men as we?
We'd, firm as rocks, we ſtand in Hal's eſteem,
The firſt and faireſt for our loyalty;
And ſhall not we bear all before us down,
The lying evidence of Sir John Falſtaff?
Comes it to that—ſay nothing—leav't to me.
By heav'ns, I'll ſtare the fat-paunch'd coward dumb;
And, tho' he brought the goſpel proof againſt us,
I'll make him own it ev'ry word a lye.
The guards are doubled! doubled let them be—
They're under your command, Sir Thomas Grey,
And we ſhall have the more for our aſſiſtance.

Sir

Sir Tho. But, if there be ſuſpicion——

Scroop. Think there none.
They tell me, yeſterday a drunken carl
Attempted rudely to break into th' preſence.
My life for't 'tis on that account; no other.
But come, the hour's at hand: let us away.
Mind well your cues, nor marr this buſtling play:
One ſhort act more, and then the day's our own;
And Mortimer ſhall clap us, from the throne. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE XI. *The King's Apartments.*

Enter *King Henry* and *Falſtaff.*

King. 'Tis well, Sir John, and now what is the ſu
For which you have ſo earneſtly requeſted
Admittance to our perſon?

Fal. My liege, you'll pardon me if I ſhould fail
point of ceremony: it being ſo long ſince I ſtood
forms, that I have almoſt forgot the punctualities
good manners.

King. Then to your buſineſs.

Fal. My buſineſs is, my liege, principally to m
your majeſty an unworthy preſent.

King. A preſent! needed there ſo much formality
This interceſſion for thyſelf in perſon,
To be the bearer of a paltry preſent?
And to what end? think not on any terms
But thoſe of thy repentance and amendment,
King Henry's favour ever can be purchas'd.

Fal. Nay, my liege, this preſent is not properly
own, nor indeed made with a view to my particular e
lument. I am employ'd herein by certain great per
ages of your majeſty's court; who, I imagine,
afraid or aſham'd, to preſent ſo improper an offerin
their own perſons.

King. Trifler! what is't?

Fal. A—dagger, my liege.

King. Ha!

Fal. (*Kneeling.*) See, here it is. (*preſents it t
King, and riſes.*) Your majeſty will doubtleſs p
me, that I fail in ſo material a part of my commiſſio
that of lodging it deep in your left breaſt.

King. What traitor can have ſent thee upon this,
So horrible a buſineſs ?

Fal. The earl of Cambridge, Scroop, and Thomas Grey, your majeſty's moſt loyal friends.

King. Good heav'n! I ſee 'tis true. Thou, father Paul,
Haſt conſtrued right their trait'rous correſpondence.
But I will ſound theſe hollow friends to th' bottom.
Falſtaff, if this be true, I live to thank thee ;
But it behoves we ſhould have further proof :
If thou art honeſt, thou wilt ſtand the teſt,
And face theſe peers, thou dar'ſt to brand with treaſon.

Fal. Your grace will take me in your high protection,
And I will prove it on them, to their beards.

King. Fear naught—I will return to thee on th' inſtant. [*Exit* King Henry.

SCENE XII. *Apartment continued.*

Falſtaff, ſolus.

Now, my fine lords of Cambridge and of Maſham, I think I'm even with you.—I overheard them condemn me to the gallows. The monkeys would make a cat's paw of me, I ſee. They would have me commit murder for their ſake, and hang me for it when I have done. In troth theſe ſprag peers, with their quick wits, are little better than aſſes after all. They confide in me, merely, becauſe they think I am a villain. Were it not a pity they ſhould not find me ſo ? They will no doubt deny this matter ſtoutly : but I've their letters, if my words be doubted ; beſides the circumſtances I could—

SCENE XIII. *Apartment continued.*

Enter *King Henry*, with the *Duke* of *York*, the three young *Princes* and Attendants.

King. Call in my uncle Exeter. Where's Scroop and Cambridge.

Lord. In the antichamber, with Sir Thomas Grey.

King. Enough—what ho ! the guards—the guards, &c.

SCENE XIV. *Apartment continued.*

(Enter at one door the Duke of *Exeter* and guards: at the other Lord *Scroop*, *Cambridge*, Sir *Thomas* Grey, with their swords drawn. They make up to the young Princes, as if to seize them: but start back on seeing the King.

Scroop. Seize—Seize the traitors there—arrest them all.
King. Who are they, lords? put up, here is but one.
Cam. All's lost. (*Aside.*
Grey. All's ruin'd. (*Aside.*
Scroop. May heav'n preserve your majesty; we fear'd
Some dang'rous treason at the cry of guards;
And therefore rush'd thus arm'd into your presence.
King. My lords, I thank ye; and in right good time
Ye come, to vindicate your noble characters
Against th' aspersion of this villain traitor;
Who, with a bloody and malicious purpose,
Came here to seek our life: but, failing there,
In that I wrested from him this same poniard,
He dares, with matchless and assured countenance,
Charge you, my lords, and you, Sir Thomas Grey;
My best, my nearest, dearest, worthiest friends,
With being vile abettors of his treason.
My lords, you speak not.—Yet I do not wonder;
Ye are struck dumb with horror and amazement:
For what consummate villainy is that
Which can suggest men to resemble devils,
That they can wear an angel's outward form,
And yet be black at heart as hell itself?
What shall be done, my lords, with this vile monster?
Scroop. Thou hoary villain! thou ungrateful traitor!
Was it for this I sought unto his highness
To have some pity on thy bending age,
And take thee back again to grace and favour?
Is this the fair return thou mak'st my kindness?
By heav'n, wer't not in presence of the king,
I would this instant pluck thee by the beard,
And stab thee to the heart.—My sov'reign liege,
So dear I hold your highness' sacred person,
That, for this execrably vile attempt,
I think this horrid wretch should strait be sentenc'd,
And executed without farther question.

King.

King. And yet, my lord, the buſy prating world,
For ever envious of the good man's fame,
Might whiſper ſtill what his vile breath hath utter'd.
No, my good friends, ye ſhall be fully clear'd.
This wretch ſhall ſhew at length, before the world,
That what he has avow'd is falſe: for true
It cannot be. What traitor canſt thou offer,
To prove your charge againſt theſe noble lords?

Fal. My liege, by good luck have I here two letters,
Sent by theſe lords to me, upon this buſineſs:
The writing theirs, their ſignets too preſerv'd.
(Gives the letters to the king.)

Scroop. What forgery too! hath heav'n no thunder left
To ſtrike this precious villain?

Fal. By heav'ns, a noble actor! 'tis a pity he was not bred to th' ſtage.

Scroop. Cambridge! why man your quiv'ring lip betrays you.

Cam. It is in vain: let us at once confeſs.

Scroop. Confeſs! damnation! huſh—huſh for your life.

King. Look here, my lords, are theſe your ſignatures?

Scroop. Flat forgery! and yet, good heav'ns, how like!

King. What art there is in diabolick natures!
If ſuch things as theſe obtain i'th'world,
Not angel innocence on earth is ſafe.

Fal. My liege it is no forgery; I can dare them to the proof.

Scroop. Dare us, thou traitor! thou muſt find the proof.
To tell us here, before our ſov'reign's face,
Thou haſt ſold thy ſelf to hell for this,
That devil furniſh'd thee with ſeal and characters
So much reſembling mine?

Fal. If they're not yours, it was, indeed, the devil in likeneſs of yourſelf.

King. This is too much: what in our preſence thus
To prevent this inſolence! Take him away.

Fal. Good, my liege.

King Guards take him hence. *(Falſtaff exit guarded.)*
——And now, my worthy lords,

Altho' I clearly ſee this traitor's purpoſe,
I hold it meet, that on this accuſation,
You and our friend Sir Thomas Grey ſubmit
To have your innocence clear'd up in form.
This traitor doubtleſs hath accomplices;
We'll publiſh inſtantly reward and pardon
For their diſcovery.

Scroop. I hope your majeſty
Hath not a doubt, as touching our allegiance.

King. My lord, I know your worth too well, to doubt it;
And alſo yours, lord Cambridge, and Sir Grey:
Yet, to appear impartial to the world,
And ſtop the mouth of ev'ry future cenſure;
Ye muſt be well contented, for a while,
To bear ye as arreſted for high treaſon.
We will a while delay our embarkation,
To bring this matter to immediate iſſue:
So when th' accuſer's falſehood be made known,
Ye ſhall come forth again, like gold refin'd,
By ſo much brighter as ſevere your trial.
By heav'n, I'd ſooner loſe my own right hand,
Than any true and loyal heart that's here
Should ſuffer by the practices of treaſon.
Uncle, a guard.—Ye now, good ſirs, are priſoners.

(The conſpirators deliver up their ſwords.)

Scroop. Confiding in your higneſs' ſacred word,
We thus obey your pleaſure; nothing doubting
But from your majeſty we ſhall have juſtice.

(Scroop, Cambridge and Grey are led off.)

SCENE XV. *Apartment continued.*

King. Doubt it not. Yes, ye ſhall have ample juſtice.
Why that vile Maſham is deceit itſelf.
I thought I ſhould have ſham'd him to confeſſion:
But he is proof I ſee 'gainſt all remorſe.
Are theſe the aſps I've cheriſh'd in my breaſt
And warm'd to life to thank me with their ſtings!
Go, uncle Exeter, and ſee them ſafe. [*Exit* Exeter.
My brother Glouceſter, thou, to Sir John Falſtaff;
And promiſe him our favour and protection.

Gloſ. Falſtaff, my liege, the ſlave who ſought your life?

King.

King. That, my good brother, was indeed his errand;
Hir'd to that end by Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey:
But he, tho' nothing but an outcaſt robber,
One that I baniſh'd for his vicious courſes,
Yet how much better than theſe boſom friends!
He, brother Gloſter, play'd the villains fa'ſe,
And told me all their purpoſe. Bring him hither.
[*Exit* Gloſter.

[Enter a *Page.*]

Page. My liege, a reverend friar, poſt haſte from London,
Deſires admittance to your majeſty.

King 'Tis father Paul: conduct him in.

[Enter *Friar Paul.*]

Good father Paul, thrice welcome to Southampton.
We thank thee for th' advices thou haſt ſent us.
Thy love and zeal ſhall not go unrepaid.

Friar. My liege, if ought my poor abilities
Can ſerve your majeſty, I'm bound in duty;
And in thoſe ſervices am well repaid.

King. Friar, we thank thee. Thou haſt brought that ſcrowl,
Of which thou gav'ſt us notice in thy letters.

Friar. I have, my liege, and with your gracious leave,
I would unfold the characters before you;
And ſhow your Majeſty whereon I grounded
My information 'gainſt the cenſur'd peers.

King. Another time we'll liſten to't at large:
But providence in their own toils hath caught 'em,
And there remains no doubt of their defection.

Friar. Be all ſuch traitors timely thus betray'd.

King. Give us the ſcroll. We'll ſee how this will work.
My uncle York, go fetch the traitors in. [*Exit* York.
Heav'ns what a worthy ſeeming wore theſe men!
How ſmooth a face of innocence and loyalty!
All gracious Providence, what thanks are due
To thy preventing pow'r for our deliv'rence!

SCENE XVI. *Apartment* continued.

Enter *York*, with the conſpirators guarded.

King. My lords, I hope you're arm'd, in your defence,
With proofs as ſtrong as thoſe of your accuſers

For, whatſoever love I bear your perſons,
I cannot reſt th' impartial hand of juſtice.
The character of Falſtaff was ſuſpicious;
But here's a man, I'm ſorry, Sirs, to find,
Joins alſo in ſuſpecting you of treaſon.

Scroop (Aſide.) How, father Paul! what dæmon ſent him here?

King. My lord of Cambridge, know'ſt thou of this letter?
Look at it well, and mark the characters.
Perhaps lord Scroop too can decypher them?

Scroop. Ha!

Cam. Yes, I ſee the hand of heav'n is over us. [*Aſide.*
I do, my liege, and thus upon my knees
Confeſs, ahd plead for mercy.
[*Cambridge* and *Grey* kneel.

Sir *T. Grey.* And I.

Scroop. Fire and furies!
What is that ſcroll, my liege? I know it not.

King. Lord Scroop, I ſee thou'lt brave it to the laſt.
I do believe thou know'ſt not much of this;
This friar, it ſeems made bold to intercept it.

Scroop. Curſe on the meddling prieſt, and thee, the fool, [To *Cambridge.*
That ſent thy blunderers on ſuch an errand.
Nay, ſince all's loſt, I boaſt the treaſon too.

King. Thou more than ſavage, moſt inhuman Scroop—

Scroop. Nay, chide not, king, I heed not thy reproaches.
I aſk no mercy; for I know thoul't have none,
Thou'rt fortune's minion, and my head is thine.
Take't when thou wilt—my folly has undone me.
This ſon of York (ten thouſand curſes on him.)—

Cam. I do repent me: 'twas indeed my cauſe.
And would my life alone could pay the forfeit.

Scroop. Thy cauſe! thou grov'ling peer! and doſt thou think
I meant to raiſe up Mortimer or thee?
No, ye were only tools to my ambition,
That ſoar'd an higher pitch. Think not, king Henry,
In hate of thee, I ſought thy crown and life;
Or that the love I bore the houſe of York,

Taught

Taught me to mix with ſuch vile heartleſs traitors.
No: for myſelf alone I fought the crown.
Cam. On what pretenſions? thou!
Scroop. Go aſk thy wife,
Whom thou mayſt thank, when coming to the block,
If e'er thou find'ſt thy way from thence to heav'n.
Cam. My wife! O villain!
King. Lead the traitors hence,
And yield them to the juſtice of our laws.
Where's Sir John Falſtaff? *(Conſpirators are led off.*
Lord. Here, my liege, he comes,
With th' duke of York.

[Enter Duke of *York* and *Falſtaff.*

King. Sir John, your former ills
Your later act of loyalty hath cancell'd:
And, as we hear you promiſe better things
Than the looſe conduct of your former days,
As a new man we take thee to our favour.
Fal. I thank your gracious majeſty moſt humbly.
King. Nor do we leſs reſpect the ties of gratitude:
Ask what thou wilt, we will repay thy ſervice.
Fal. My liege, the love I bear your gracious perſon,
Would excite me to follow you to theſe ſame wars; but,
I'm married and grown ſomething round, I'm little
fit to cope with raw bon'd Frenchmen; or ſhine again
th' bloody fields of Mars. My former deeds in arms
Your highneſs knows; and I know too you hold them
cheap enough: I hope it will not therefore be thought
Cowardly in me, if, while the other gallant youth of
Britain are reaping lawrels in the heart of France, I am
content to kiſs dame peace at home. Your majeſty will
pleaſe to order me from your Exchequer a competency
To ſupport the infirmities of nature, and the dignity of
Knighthood. *Otium cum dignitate*, my liege.—Would
your majeſty ſecure me this, I would make my peace
With the world, and live or die as Heav'n ſees beſt, and
As my wife will let me.
King. Thou haſt thy wiſh; and now, my noble lords,
Let us prepare for France: firſt ſolemn thanks
Paid in our churches paid for our deliv'rance.
The hand of Heav'n, thus manifeſtly ſhown
In this our preſervation, bids us hope
That ſucceſs will crown our enterprize.

Exe. And proves, my liege, the juſtice of that cauſe,
Which Heav'n, in thee, hath taken in protection.

King. Right well obſerv'd, good uncle Exeter.
Who boaſts a rightful cauſe, come what come may,
Arm'd for th' adventure of the rougheſt day,
By juſtice ſanctified, his ſword and ſhield,
May dare the perils of the bloodieſt field,
Boldly in providence may put his truſt;
Heav'n is our champion when our cauſe is juſt.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

FINIS.